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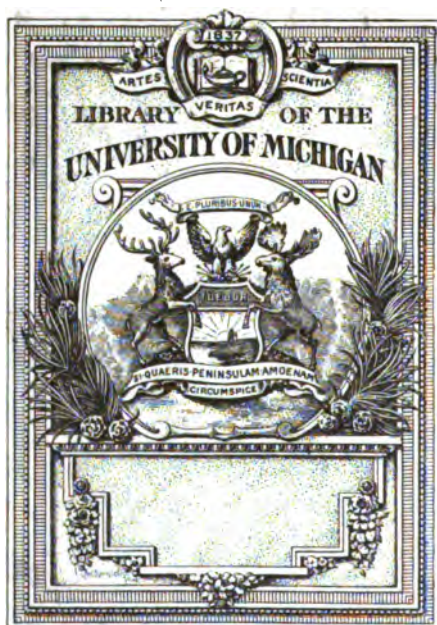
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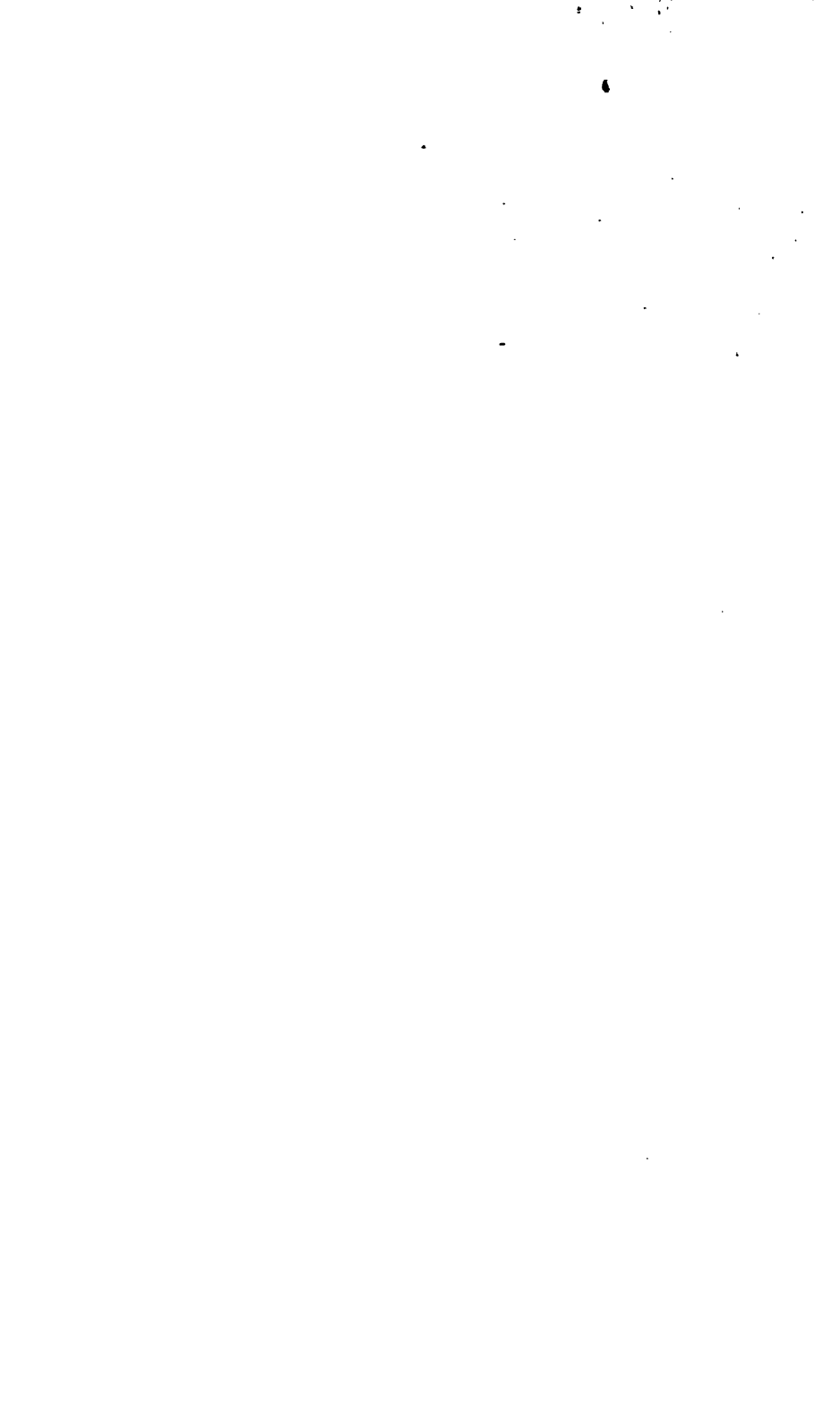
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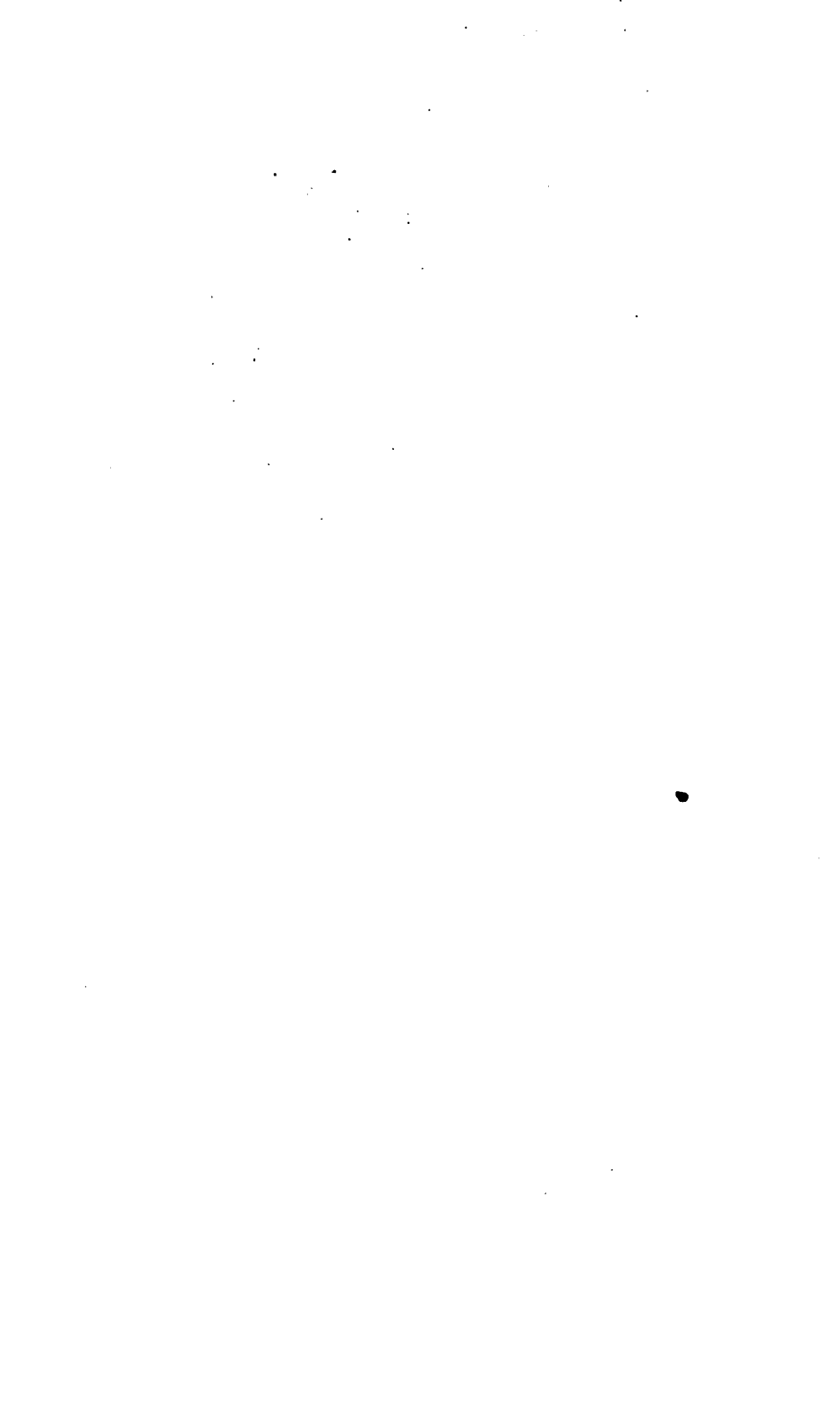
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A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE.

See the Poem.

LONDON SOCIETY.

An Illustrated Magazine

OF

LIGHT AND AMUSING LITERATURE

FOR

THE HOURS OF RELAXATION.

VOLUME XLI.

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LONDON SOCIETY.

JANUARY 1882.

LADY BEAUTY.

Book the *First*.

LADY BEAUTY'S MOTHER.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE READER LEARNS THAT THIS STORY IS TOLD NOT FROM FORETHOUGHT,
BUT THROUGH A COMMON CHANCE OF LIFE.



FOR the room had grown darker to a certainty. No doubt glass and silver shone as clearly as before, the damask was as white, the bloom of the flowers as rich, and the mingled lights—sunlight straight from off the green lawn outside, and lamp-light just coming into radiance on the dinner-table—had not lost brightness by one ray. And yet the room was darker. Everybody felt that. I spoke it aloud, and we all looked round

the table and the walls, and confessed that the room was several shades darker.

‘It always is darker,’ whispered an old gentlemen at my side, ‘when Lady Beauty leaves the room—always!’

There were six other men at the table; but as we spoke, two of these fell into discussion upon the old theme of Tory and

Whig. Two more—parsons—struck off into some conversation about ‘High’ and ‘Low.’ How the third pair employed themselves I forget, but they did not join our conversation. Plainly the elderly gentleman and myself were to start a dialogue of our own; and as plainly, we should neither be interrupted nor overheard. I did not know my companion’s name; but his fine figure and his cheerful face had already made me feel an interest in him, and I resolved to keep up the talk which he had so pleasantly begun.

‘Who may Lady Beauty be?’ I asked.

‘You are a stranger here,’ replied the old man, with a smile which pleased me more than ever.

I confessed it.

‘Or you would know who Lady Beauty is. Her praise is on everybody’s lips.’

‘But,’ I said, ‘generally I pay every lady in a room the tribute of at least one look; and—and—I did not notice a young woman here this evening.’

‘I said nothing about a young woman,’ my friend continued, with a vivacity which gleamed in his eyes and carved scores of humorous little wrinkles round the corners of his mouth. ‘Lady Beauty is not young—by the almanac, that is.’

‘Then who can she be?’ I reflected. ‘Not surely that spare aggressive-looking woman that sat between you and me, and talked of female suffrage and the higher education of woman!’

My old friend laughed with great relish.

‘That is her eldest sister.’

‘Well, surely not that tall artificial-looking old maid—is she an old maid, by the way?—who had such a fine outline, and such a suspicious bloom upon her cheeks!’

‘No, not her; that is the second sister,’ the old gentleman answered, with another laugh. ‘A widow, too, my young friend.’

‘I have it!’ cried I, slapping the table a little in my excitement, so that Whig and Tory glanced up, but seeing it was nothing resumed their argument. ‘It was that lady in black, with the silver hair, neither stout nor slim, who spoke so clear and low, and seemed to keep everybody in good-humour about her. Pity I sat so far away! I was envying the people near her all dinner-time. Am I right?’

‘You are,’ he answered. ‘That was Lady Beauty; and when she left the table, she did take some light away with her. You thought you were making a gallant sort of joke applied to the sex generally; but you spoke more truth than you fancied. The room *was* darker when she left. Darker to me it always is;’ and my old friend breathed a sigh, which interested me more than ever.

'I did not know it was she who carried the light away,' I said. 'I had scarcely noticed her.'

'There is her praise,' the old gentleman answered warmly. 'She does not force herself upon you. And I daresay many days you don't look at the sun; but when sunset comes you miss him none the less.'

By such pleasant paths we entered into a conversation. My friend told me many things about 'Lady Beauty,' to which I listened with an attention which pleased him greatly; so much that, when we were about to leave the table, he took me gently by the sleeve, and said that, if I had nothing better to do that night, and liked a chat and a cigar, and would accept a seat in his carriage, he would tell me all the story of Lady Beauty. I was too much interested in himself and his narrative to say no; and the story, so commenced, and continued on several subsequent evenings, I have here recorded without any attempt at art, just in the simple way I heard it. I offer it here for the acceptance, amusement, and instruction of that portion of creation who, as they are the fountain of life and its best prize, may, by the use of the gifts God has so choicely bestowed upon them, be not alone the ornament, but the joy, of the men they love. In which high art I respectfully ask them to learn a lesson from 'Lady Beauty.'

CHAPTER II.

'MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE; THE MISSES TEMPLE.'

SOMETHING like forty years ago there fell vacant at the other end of this town a large house with a spacious and splendid garden. Its original proprietor had lived in it for sixty years, and being a man of great wealth and fine taste, he had transformed what was once a comfortable family residence into a mansion, filled with all luxuries, and surrounded with green-houses, hot-houses, vineries, stables, coach-houses, and all the other appurtenances of a grand house. He died, and his hundreds of thousands ran off in a golden river of good luck to a nephew in the north of England, who had his own estate. Immediately the question was asked in our little provincial set, 'Who will take the Beeches?' for by that simple name the mansion was known. Everybody was afraid of the Beeches; afraid of its gilded rooms, its noble halls, its green-houses, hot-houses, vineries, stables, and coach-houses aforesaid; afraid of its splendid traditions, gone, we felt, never to return; afraid of comparison with the former owner—a poor sickly shadow in later days, but even then such a lord at the head of his table, such a judge of wines, so plentiful with his choice vintages too; such an expert

in gardeners and cooks, as our town of Kettlewell never saw before, and was never likely to see again. So the great house stood vacant month after month, and year after year, haunted by no ghosts except memories of magnificence, which did indeed seem to glide through the vast damp rooms, down the wide stairs, or through the noble gardens, now returning to wilderness season by season. Everybody was afraid of the Beeches. We all said, 'The Beeches will never let again.'

Let it did, however. There came a little lady one day, erect, commanding in her manner, and rich in her attire. She asked to see the house. She went from room to room, and marked with approving eye how glorious was the place; and sharply she inquired of the agent if there was any reason why the house had not let, except the alleged one of its extraordinary grandeur. He assured her that there was none. At this she broke into a little laugh, which meant, 'Kettlewell people must be fools.' 'What rooms for dancing!' she ejaculated. 'What staircases, up and down!' And then she set her own dapper figure in one of the glasses of the console-tables, and murmured, 'Admirable, admirable taste!' 'I shall take this house,' she said aloud, as she set her foot on the threshold. And as she went from room to room she kept repeating, 'I shall take this house.' 'Bedroom,' 'dressing-room,' 'morning-room,' 'library,' 'boudoir,' 'servants' hall.' With such words of assignment on her lips she went about, and the whole mansion was allotted to separate uses when she had completed her inspecting tour. She came back into the empty dining-room, and the young man who, full of awe, had followed her round the house, heard her say to herself, 'O, what a room for a dance!' Then he, going out on some errand, and suddenly returning, saw the little dame step down the empty floor in some formal dance, most mystic in his eyes, and bowing with aristocratic grace to some invisible partner. The young man recalled his own hops at the citizens' ball, and wondered what this grave measure could be. But the little lady pulled up all of a sudden, with a whistle of her silks, and repeated for the fiftieth time, 'I shall take this house.'

'Mrs. Barbara Temple,' was her reply when the agent asked her name. She delivered it with decided emphasis, as if the syllables might be pondered; and forthwith she gave orders for many things to be done to the house and grounds, saying that she would come in next month. You may be sure we were all alive with curiosity to know everything about Mrs. Barbara Temple. She turned out to be a widow—a widow for the second time, we heard—and with three daughters. She had first married an old man of vast wealth, who died when she was two-and-twenty, leaving her with no children, and a great fortune settled on her.

Next, to avenge herself for the privations of her first marriage, she allied herself to a young ensign of twenty-five, handsome and penniless. With him she lived happily for seven years, during which time she gave birth to three daughters. Then the young officer died; and so, having got a fortune by the first husband, and a family by the second, Mrs. Barbara Temple was now making ready to lead the remainder of her life according to her own heart.

The family came into residence on the last Friday in April 1858. Nothing was seen of them, you may guess, on Saturday, and everybody was on tiptoe expectation for their entry into the parish church on Sunday morning. Thither they came, regularly enough, like good worshippers, having, by the way, spoiled the worship of everybody beside. First comes my little dame, natty and brisk, and with something in her movements that almost made you fancy she must be a puppet animated by enchantment. Silks, feathers of the rarest sort, a fan—the weather being hot—and her frame braced up into such erectness, that each of her inches was worth two; so Mrs. Barbara Temple walked into church. There was spirit in the eye which went round the building, not with unpleasing boldness, but with most unmistakable courage. There was a vigour in her step which told of a good constitution, and she held her fan in a way that signified temper. Indeed, when the pew-opener blundered over the latch of the door, and kept her waiting in the aisle, she dealt one glance at the woman—one only—but what a rebuke was in it! At sight of the flash, old Sparkins the doctor, who had been watching the new-comer rather obtrusively, was struck with fear that he might catch the next; and he dropped into his prayer-book like a bird shot in mid air, trying to look as if he had seen nothing since service began.

Three daughters came behind. The first impression they gave us was of a profusion of rich dress, chosen and worn with taste which was simply faultless. The next impression was of tallness of figure, the more conspicuous for the tiny dame who led the way. The third impression was of beauty, set out in style and fashion such as our little town could not rival; and we did not think ourselves provincial in any but the geographical sense. After this, we had time to judge and praise the beauties girl by girl.

Girl the first walked with a mincing step, and a toss of her head which, though strictly within the limits of good breeding, was noticeable and significant. Clever she looked too, and her eyes were clear gray, eyes that could search you—and did search you—reading your face with great rapidity and apprehension. She was the most striking figure of the three, being very tall,

and with splendid shoulders. Her face, it is true, would not bear much looking into; and had you taken it feature by feature, as the children were taught to break the fagot in the fable, you might have proved it a poor face enough. But taken in its wholeness, and set upon that superb bust, it was a face which I should not have recommended a young fellow to gaze at too long unless he meant matrimony. And then her dress—her dress! O, never tell me that a woman cannot double—treble—her looks if she has money in her pocket and taste in her eye!

But the next was prettier; indeed, pretty was not the word appropriate to a woman who was unquestionably handsome, who knew her beauty, and was proud of it. The second Miss Temple had a nose of most exquisite shape; large melting eyes of gray, ready to turn to blue; and she had a lovely mouth, perhaps with a little too much of the chisel about it, too finely finished, wanting in expression, and with a slight hint of disdain carved on its fine corners. Beauty, professed beauty, confessed beauty, and clad to distraction; so she glided into her pew, and we had time to consider girl the third.

Girl the third! Shall I ever forget her face, then in the first sweet flush of youth! Shall I ever forget the light that shone in those deep serious eyes!—the thousand possibilities of tender or delicate expression that seemed to hover around that mouth, ready to alight and unfold themselves whenever summoned! I had been thinking a thousand frivolous and misplaced thoughts, but something in this face restored me by the most delightful of recalls to the mood of a worshipper. Never, never, outside heaven, shall I see such a face again. It was like the dream of a painter, and he a painter whose fancy had drunk of some celestial stream of feeling and idea, until he had caught on his canvas a face which had in it all that could be heavenly in a thing of earth, and all that could be earthly in a thing of heaven. Laugh not at me, neither call me irreverent, if I say that one could have fancied her some painted Madonna descending from the walls of a church, taking human form, and wearing modern vesture. On this girl vesture gave you no hint of fashion; her countenance etherealised her attire, so that she might have been wearing an angel's floating drapery instead of the last Paris fashion. But I see you smile; and is not every rare emotion bound to hide itself, lest, being seen, it should be ridiculed for eccentricity?

Those eyes could shine with earthly or heavenly love. In each case it would be love deep, pure, intense, with not a thought of evil on its white and living page. That mouth could kiss as daughter, or mistress, or mother, and which kiss would be sweetest who could foretell from one who seemed fit to perform

every womanly duty in the most womanly way? In her look there was something neither of age nor youth, but of what I should try to describe as fulness; the meridian of the nature, when the early and the later sentiments meet, in equal strength, the simplicity of youth, the graveness of serious life. She was fair, and her hair light brown; and I saw a trace of a little foot as she turned into her pew. But when she knelt and covered her face, I did the same quite unconsciously. It seemed right after the vision of her.

CHAPTER III.

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY WHO WAS AT HOME IN THIS WORLD.

THAT week everybody called upon the Temples. The universal impression was favourable, and we all rejoiced over so vivacious an addition to our society, and already the question was flying from lip to lip among the ladies, 'Whom will the Misses Temple marry?' That on the grounds of social position and education the new-comers would stand high amongst us was not doubted for a moment; while their easy fortune was proclaimed by their dress, the furniture of their house, and their manner of life generally. Each successive visitor had something new to tell. One remarked how finely the furniture and ornaments were fancied. Another marked the glories of the harp and the piano. 'The pictures are lovely,' said a third; 'not a poor one on the walls!' And carpets, and oil-cloths, and the colouring of the walls came in for commendation in due course. All of us were delighted with the lively conversation of the girls; and we marvelled unanimously at Mrs. Temple's wide knowledge of the world, and the briskness with which she uttered it. Nor was one of these praises undeserved. The drawing-room of the Temples was a charming contrast to most of those around. Ease, cultivation, liveliness, whatever is choicest in social intercourse, seemed to pervade the very air; and you felt as you entered the room that you had passed into a region where refinement reigned supreme. The Temples were, somehow, above us all. We felt it; and with increasing diffidence, as we realised our inferiority, was the question asked, '*Whom will the Misses Temple marry?*'

But old Sparking, who was our shrewdest head by a long way, hearing this question asked at Miss Whiffin's house one afternoon, remarked, with a comical face to fix our attention, that we had not disposed of the mother yet. Surprising that so natural a thought had not suggested itself before! Mrs. Temple, as we understood, had been married very early; and our most competent female critics declared that she could not be more than forty-five, or, rather, I should say, they put it that she could not

be less. We had several widows and spinsters of ripe years, and these agreed that forty-five was still a marrying age; indeed, some of the ladies declared that it was the best time of all—an opinion in which Sparking concurred with much vehemence and solemnity, only the old fellow was caught winking slyly at a confidential friend immediately after, which aroused some suspicion. That Mrs. Barbara Temple might be married before any of her daughters, that she was yet an attractive and marrying woman, we all admitted. There was that in her manner with men which told that she had not yet abandoned either the hope or



See p. 4.

the methods of conquest; and it was plain to us all that less likely women are married every day of the year. Besides, the fortune was hers—absolutely—as we had discovered on undoubted testimony; and since the fortune could not be less than three thousand a year, we began to see that for the present it was Mrs. Temple, not her daughters, who was likely to be the prize in our next matrimonial race. So, having settled this in our minds, we proceeded like rational beings to choose a husband for the animated widow; and with scarcely a dissentient opinion, we

came to the conclusion that our rector, the Reverend Anthony Brent, would be the happy man. We were not altogether wrong in this conjecture, as my story shall disclose. But Mr. Brent does not emerge on our historic page at present.

Let me tell you here that, in the course of a long life, I have never met a woman who could match Mrs. Barbara Temple. Cleverer women, handsomer women, wittier women, I have met in scores ; but the secret of Mrs. Barbara Temple was her utter and hearty love of this present world. Of this present world she was, I believe, the sincerest and most unquestioning worshipper that ever lived. She put no strain upon herself to become what she was ; she quenched no aspiration and repressed no misgiving. Worldliness was the simple honest expression of her natural disposition and her judgment on affairs. Never religious devotee was so completely enclosed in a creed as she. For, indeed, it was a creed, and a life too, and Mrs. Barbara Temple loved the world just as a flower loves sunlight : she obeyed a law of her own nature. But the cheerfulness with which she obeyed it ; her unquestioning faith in the power of the world to satisfy every want ; the absence of suspicion that there could be any higher



See p. 12.

motive in life, or, indeed, any other motive at all ; and the cheerfulness and alacrity with which she followed out her convictions, made her of necessity a vigorous and original character. All that makes what such people call 'the world' she longed for and prized. Accomplishments, money, taste, health, the good opinion of society, these, and a thousand kindred matters, she regarded as severally constituents of happiness, to be sought with the utmost solicitude every hour of the day. She was grateful to the world for being what it was to her—an ever-running fountain of desire or pleasure. When you first saw her in the day she was ready for talk or amusement ; and with unflagging enthusiasm she went from hour to hour, entering upon each new scene of the daily round as fresh as if she had just been awakened from a pleasant sleep. Till

the last light was put out at night she showed no symptom of weariness or abated zest. *After* the last light was put out I used sometimes to wonder what she would think of, when her dresses and jewels were laid aside, and the long hours lay in dark and silent succession before her. But whatever thoughts or dreams troubled her, all vanished with the morning. She rose again, elastic and bounding, and a new day was a new life to her.

More than once I have watched her face at church when the clergyman read out that verse, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world;' and I have wondered what she would make of it. For Mrs. Barbara Temple went to church regularly, and treated religion with deference, at least so long as religion confined itself within sacred walls and hours. In general conversation the barest allusion to what are sometimes called 'serious' subjects was resented by her so palpably that such an indiscretion was never repeated by the same offender. Her belief, however, might have been fully expressed in the words, 'Love the world; for in the name of common sense what is there besides worth loving?' How she adjusted this creed with what she heard said or read in church—which she never quarrelled with—I cannot imagine. She had her own opinion, I am sure; for she was no dunce. At one time or another she must have mentally compared her ways and thoughts with those of others; and the match of herself she never could have found. England could not have produced a woman who could have reassured her, or confirmed her in her belief, by saying, 'I think so too.' But whatever she thought, or whatever she expected in the future, her faith and practice never wavered. She worshipped the world, trusted it to the uttermost; and she was convinced that it could and would do for her all she desired.

Have I sufficiently sketched her figure? Will a few strokes more make her a clearer image in your mind's eye? She was short, as I have said, trimly built, perhaps a trifle too stout, but that might be disputed. Her nose was rather large, but finely cut, like her second daughter's, and she dressed her brown hair in short ringlets which well suited the style of her face. Her colour was good, and high enough to make people ask questions; and her eyebrows were not free from suspicious traces of making up. Her dress was always rich and admirably suited to her figure and years; for she was careful to look full forty-five. She avoided all absurd affectation of youth; and although a kind of sprightly dancing step, which she often fell into, might have seemed rather a fault in this direction, most of us considered this gait nothing but surplus vitality acting on a frame so light and plump that it seemed made to skip, or bound like a ball.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTAINS A PREACHER, TEXT, SERMON, AND CONGREGATION, ALL OUT OF THE COMMON.

MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE was fully determined to train up her children in the way they should go. What that way was she knew well. It was the way she had gone herself, and from which she had never departed; she could describe its every turn and corner with the confidence of an expert; and she could laud its glories with the fervour of a believer.

Her favourite hour with her girls was before lunch, when they would all assemble in the library. While the light pursuits of the morning occupied their eyes and fingers, the mother would con over the events of yesterday, or anticipate those of the coming afternoon and evening. Every sentence she let fall was salted with her own philosophy, for no preacher of righteousness ever improved occasions more diligently than did this little woman; nor was ever preacher more in earnest, for to the very tips of her fingers she was packed full of one conviction—that the improvement and enjoyment of the life that now is form the whole duty of man.

The girls were all clever and of independent mind. While they could not but be influenced by the doctrine they heard, yet they received it not slavishly, but with such private stipulations and adjustments as suited their own wishes and intentions. The eldest—Caroline—was decidedly bookish, with a liking for masculine studies; and she was now, by the help of one of Hamilton's translations, teaching herself Virgil. Sibyl—the handsome daughter—was fond of painting, and would sketch anything, from a cluster of grapes to a landscape. She was fond of painting fancy head-and-shoulder portraits of pretty women, and among portraits of pretty women was fondest most of all of painting her pretty self. Sophia, the youngest—the angelic girl—was musical, but with a taste for reading too; and Mrs. Barbara Temple used to say that if only Sophia could be once made to feel the importance of life, she would be the most brilliant of the three, and the happiest. What happiness signified in this little woman's vocabulary readers can guess for themselves.

Here sit the family, then, upon a fine May morning. Caroline had her books spread out before her—a grammar, a dictionary, and the Virgil with the translation of the benevolent Mr. Hamilton underlining the Latin. She is looking out her nouns and verbs, and as she finds each, she notes it down in the sweetest of pocket-books—a minikin monitor in morocco which is always with her, and into which she peeps night and morning, before she sleeps and when she wakes, tripping off a column of Latin with careful face and lips. Sibyl sits apart, and before her stands

a small table on which is set—a mirror! She is transferring the vision of the glass upon the paper before her—'Portrait of a Lady one hundred and twenty-oneth,' Caroline laughingly cries, at which her sister, glancing up undaunted from her task, asks if Carry can say the first declension yet. Sophia, with sweet grave face and downset eyes, is reading Shakespeare. Mrs. Barbara Temple, who never can be still, is walking up and down the room, looking at her daughters with admiration, or pausing to see how Sibyl is getting on, but all the time preaching with wonderful energy.

'Lecture morning, dear,' Sibyl whispered, in a roguish whisper, to Sophia as their mother entered the room. She saw homiletics in the maternal eye. 'We shall have firstly, secondly, thirdly, and the conclusion of the whole matter to-day;' at which Sophia laughed and blushed, divided between fun and fear.

'You are good girls, all of you,' the little woman said, as she paced the carpet. 'I am proud of you all; but I cannot make you serious. You don't—and won't—understand the value of youth, and the preciousness of time and opportunity.'

'But, mamma,' Caroline remarked, looking in the dictionary for some irregular verb whose pedigree had quite baffled her, 'we do try to improve the time; I am sure we do!'

'Caroline dear, do take that pen out of your mouth!' cried the little lady. 'You need not look like a grocer's clerk: *they* don't learn Latin!'

'I never shall find it,' poor Caroline murmurs, as she lays her pen on the table with a doleful face. 'I wish they would not make Latin dictionaries so very hard.'

'Now last night, when Lady Rafter was giving us that account of Paris, not one of you girls was listening,' Mrs. Temple said, resuming her discourse. 'You paid not the smallest attention.'

'Old frump!' ejaculated Sibyl, with a splendid lip of disdain. 'Who wants to hear of her stupid parties?'

'Don't call names, Sibyl,' the mother said sharply. 'Any one can be called names. We don't know what is said of us. I have been called frump myself!'

'Perhaps; but you are not a frump,' Sibyl replied, rising from her chair and standing before her mother with a kind of comic affection, while with her brush she paints an ideal face in the air. 'There! is that a frump? Is that like Lady Rafter?'

'You don't understand me, child,' the mother answered. It was evident she was not displeased. 'What I want to impress upon you is this. If you call people what they know they are not, they may forgive you; but when you give persons their right name, if it happens to be a bad one they will remember it

against you for ever. Lady Rafter being our friend, it is not prudent or right to call her a frump; it is so very obviously the right name for her. Now if you had called her a flirt—'

'A flirt, mamma!' all the girls called out in concert. Even grave Sophia smiled at the idea.

'Well, dears,' the little woman replied steadfastly, though a wilful smile twitched at the corner of her mouth, 'if Lady Rafter were to hear that you called her frump, she would be angry; if she heard that you called her a flirt, she would be pleased. It is human nature. Now if you must speak evil of your friends, let it be that sort of evil that will gratify their vanity. People will forgive you for calling them wicked; for calling them ridiculous—never.'

'Suppose they don't forgive us,' Sibyl remarked haughtily, 'what then?'

'A great deal,' the mother answered, seizing the opening for argument. 'Every enemy you make in the world is an addition to your failures in life. We are sent into this world to please and to be pleased; or, if you like to put it selfishly, you can say we are sent to please ourselves, and we please ourselves best by pleasing others. That is what I want to impress on you girls: live to please.'

'Yes,' Sibyl remarked, 'but not Lady Rafter. When I want to please, I shall not think of her.'

'Lady Rafter among the rest,' the mother answered. 'Please everybody, as far as you can; make it the study of your life, morning, noon, and night, to be agreeable. Remember, girls,' continued the little woman, standing in the centre of the room to deliver her lecture with more effect, 'remember a great responsibility is laid on us women. To us is committed the ornamental, the charming side of life. We have not to make the money, nor to fight the battles, nor to take the University degrees—'

'I wish we might,' Car sighed under her breath.

'Nor to make the fortunes. We have to enjoy and to adorn. That is the position assigned to us by—by—by the Almighty, I suppose; and I should like to make my daughters consider it their perpetual aim in life to give pleasure, to be agreeable, to be amiable; in every character, scene, and duty to be—charming!'

'Never to please oneself,' murmured Sibyl, rebelling at this hard doctrine.

'Always to please oneself,' retorted the little woman courageously. 'You will find that your own enjoyment is heightened by the consciousness of power to please others. Yes, girls, make it your rule of life, and you will never regret it. Let this be ever before your mind: "I am a creature formed to give

pleasure." Be courteous, be gentle, be refined, be sweet in all your dealings. Never lose your temper: it ruins the face, and it always leaves a disagreeable impression, which nothing quite rubs out. Depend upon it, the men may respect those creatures who are called women of character, which generally means women who perform awkwardly duties which, with a little thought, they might perform in a charming way; men may respect them, but when they want enjoyment they turn to women who study the art of pleasing. Now what I want to teach you all is, to be solid and pleasing too. Believe me, a woman is seldom called upon to do anything which she may not do in an agreeable style if she will only take pains. Now let your first thought be—never to disarrange even for an instant that drapery of pleasantness which a woman should always wear; keep it on, even for your husbands, dears; it is practice, if nothing else.'

'O mamma!' the girls cried out together, joining in a merry peal, which the little woman did not frown upon, knowing that her sermons had better be ludicrous than dull.

'Yes; be agreeable even when you are alone with your looking-glass. Never forget the purpose of your life.'

It was a picture for a finer pen than mine. This small, active, quick-witted woman of the world; these shrewd sentences; that cool worldly look, strangely mingled with earnestness; the raised forefinger which enforced the doctrine; the puppet-like figure. Then these three graceful blooming girls, in their pretty morning costumes, one reclining delicately on the sofa, another with finger-tip gracefully set to her lip as she half attended to her Virgil and half to her mother, the third trying to find a carnation in her paint-box as fair as that on her cheek. Such a lecture, such a lecturer, and such pupils never were found together before or since.

'Sophia,' the little woman called out at last, 'have you been attending?'

'Yes, mamma,' she answered; 'and I have been reading Shakespeare.'

'Shakespeare!' ejaculated the mother. 'Dry, Sophia—very dry.'

'Not the love-scene between Ferdinand and Miranda,' Sophia replied, holding up the open page.

'Well, a love-scene,' the little woman said, modifying her disapproval; 'perhaps you might find something useful in *that*. And yet I don't know,' she added. 'I think, Sophia, if you will pay attention to me I shall teach you how to behave in a love-scene better than Shakespeare could. He was only a man, after all; and I have seen a great deal of love, dear.'

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH IS ILLUSTRATED THE TRUTH THAT MATURE YEARS, A GRAVE POSITION, COMFORT AND CHEERFULNESS, ALL UNITED, CANNOT DEFEND THE HEART OF MAN FROM LOVE.

OUR little town of Kettlewell had inhabitants to the number of ten thousand, and three churches; but of these latter, two were what at that date were called district churches, and the great ancient parish church was the ecclesiastical centre of the town. Like many another such noble structure, it was but poorly endowed; and the rewards which it offered to its minister were chiefly the contemplation of venerable architecture, and a social position of considerable importance. The saying always was that none but a man of fortune could be Rector of Kettlewell. Consequently, at each vacancy the bishop was in a difficulty. Rich men he could find, able men he could find; but to find one rich and able too was not so easy; and at the last appointment, being unable to meet with a clergyman thus doubly qualified, he had chosen a wealthy parson of rather meagre abilities, who was now our spiritual chief. The Rev. Anthony Brent was a cheerful man, undersized, with a merry nose of ruby, and a countenance denoting neither deep learning nor that isolation of character which is natural in men who live above the world. Indeed, Mr. Brent did not live, nor affect to live, one inch above the level of commonplace cheerful life. He told us from his pulpit that human things are frail and nothing worth, and that man is full of misery; but having folded up his sermon, he seemed to have folded up his theology too, for when you met him on weekdays he was full of comfort and good cheer. Perhaps we are fastidious people; perhaps we are ignorant; certain it is that we never could quite satisfy ourselves that Mr. Brent was altogether a gentleman. His manners were no better than a blithe lissom creature such as he might have picked up in ten years between twenty-five and thirty-five. He had a way of alluding to 'my gardener' and 'my banker' which seemed to show, so Sparking said—Mr. Brent employed the rival practitioner—that some time in his life he had neither bank nor garden. It is very possible that had he not been so good-natured, his vulgarity might have been obvious, which it never was; for, indeed, we could not be quite sure that he was vulgar at all. Another thing puzzled us: where had his fortune come from? He was very wealthy, and a widower, and our idea was that Mrs. Brent had brought the money. This too was guess, and nothing but guess. Such, then, was our Rector; a man liked, but not greatly respected, and yet a man whom none could condemn or fairly despise; a shallow man, equal to reading his newspaper, and no more; on good terms with the world, able without any strain of conscience

to preach saintly sermons, copied out from standard divines, and at the same time live an easy average life; a comfortable man, with good intentions, sound digestion, a full purse and cellar, and one who never let his kitchen chimney freeze.

It was the reverend widower Brent whom we upon consideration had assigned to our lively Mrs. Barbara Temple as third husband; and events went rapidly to show that our forecast was not inexact. Mr. Brent was about fifty; Mrs. Barbara Temple was well known to be about forty-five: so that on the score of age there was nothing against the match; and as to inclination, the Rector soon made it evident that there was no obstacle on his side. Everybody remarked that he took the Temples up with remarkable warmth. He gave dainty little lunches and snug little dinners for them; and he was for ever calling in his carriage to take one or other of the girls a drive, the little mother attending as chaperon. At first we were in doubt as to which he was pursuing—mother or daughters; and we even thought that grave Sophia, with her heavenly face, had attracted him; but we forgot that he was a man of some common sense. Mrs. Temple was his choice: her vivacity, her polish, her knowledge of the world, her untiring energy, were all after his own heart. He soon began to drop hints, as men do who have matrimony in their heads. ‘Mrs. Temple was a remarkably fine woman.’ ‘Forty-five was the exact age that the wife of a man of fifty should be—the exact age.’ ‘Mrs. Temple did not look forty-five’ (he admitted that); ‘but’—and he would drop his voice—‘he knew she was every day of it.’ The intimation was that he had either seen the register of her baptism or she had told him the fact direct; and he declared over and over again with amusing earnestness and publicity that forty-five was the age he approved of; that for a man of his standing one year younger would be one year too young, and one year older one year too old. Of course, so far he had not said that he hoped or wished to marry Mrs. Temple; but the drift of his conversation and conduct was unmistakable.

In the mean time it was evident that the lively widow did not dislike attentions which had now become so marked that even those saw them who could see nothing. She exchanged compliments freely with the Rector, invited him to her house, praised his sermons, and she was actually found one evening at a missionary meeting over which he presided. She listened to his speech with the utmost attention, sitting erect, and keeping her eyes fixed upon him, although it would have been hard to say whether she knew or cared less about the subject. She could not have told in which continent the district spoken of lay, nor whether the people were white, brown, or black; but she listened

as attentively as if she had been hearing of dear relations in a far-off land. In short, with garden-parties and lunches and dinners and drives, things went so far that we all considered the matter settled; and when we heard that no proposals had yet been made, we all agreed that there must be a tacit engagement, which, for some private reasons, was not just yet to be avowed. To all intents and purposes, we regarded Mrs. Temple and Mr. Brent as affianced; and, on the whole, we approved of our Rector's choice. Certainly we should have liked a lady more interested in religious affairs; but then, we argued, it was much better than if he had married a young woman. So, balancing matters, we accepted the event with satisfaction.

The Rector was in ecstasies. He was in his element, dancing attendance on these four brilliant women; and really a careless observer might have been puzzled to tell which of the four he was pursuing. In the most polished of hats, the newest of suits, the most faultless lavender gloves, and looking all over a comfortable ecclesiastic, he would flit around them, glowing and beaming with satisfaction. The girls, for their part, accepted his civilities with charming freedom; and their mother—shrewd woman—never manifested the smallest jealousy. In this, beside proving her own good sense, she paid her admirer a compliment which he fully deserved; for he looked upon the three girls as daughters already, and was fond of them in the most parental fashion.

'Ah, Mrs. Temple,' he said one day, when he was getting hot, as the children say in their hide-and-seek game, 'I have but one child—a son, a dear good fellow, away in Australia. I always longed for daughters.'

Whereupon Mrs. Barbara Temple turned full upon him one of her keen looks, which said, 'I understand,' but a good-humoured look all the time; and then she broke into a little bland laugh, and made herself more comfortable in her seat, for they were driving. The Rector was just going to propose then and there; but it happened that the carriage, speeding down the dusty road, met the Curate, who was footing it home from some remote part of the parish, where he had been visiting a sick old woman. He signalled the carriage to stop, and addressed the Rector:

'Old Spearman is dying,' he said.

'Poor Hannah Spearman!' the Rector replied, shaking his head. 'I have known her many years. Poor Hannah Spearman!'

'Polly,' the Curate remarked—'Polly Spearman.'

'Of course it is Polly,' the Rector rejoined. 'In visiting about in a parish like mine'—he turned to Mrs. Temple—'one's

head gets so full of Pollies and Sallies and Billies that one takes the name that comes first. I am sorry for poor Polly. But what *can* you do in a case of natural decay

'It is not natural decay,' the Curate answered, with a dryness in his manner. 'She fell down-stairs.'

'To be sure, she fell down-stairs!' little Mr. Brent reproving his faulty memory by a gesture of his glove. 'How came I to confound the two—*complaints*?'

'Perhaps because you are suffering from a third,' said the Curate. He loved a joke, and had before this broken on his own bishop. And our Rector was a tempting being not apt to take offence, and not one to inspire great fear.

The carriage drove on; but for once little Mr. Brent was downright angry.

'Rather an impertinent speech,' he said, glancing disapprovingly at Mrs. Temple.

'Impertinent!' cried easy-humoured Mrs. Temple. 'Of the sort.'

'Milligan has no sense of propriety.'

She gave a little laugh.

'I like Mr. Milligan.'

At this Mr. Brent took heart, changed his view of the matter, reddened with pleasure, and gave himself up to it, which lasted until the tears were chasing each other down his rosy cheeks. But somehow the proposal was not made to

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE LAST CHAPTER IS LED FORWARD TO THE ISSUE, WHICH SHOWS THAT VANITY CAN VANQUISH LOVE WHEN LOVE IS QUISHED ALL BESIDE.

THE following morning Mr. Brent received a letter from his son in Australia, announcing his intention of returning to England for a few months. The reason of this return was that he went on to furnish. The son said he feared his father would think him very foolish; but love was bringing him home, and here was the worst of the matter—love under very peculiar circumstances. He had fallen in love with—a picture! He had seen the portrait of a girl whose face had impressed him more than the living face of any woman had; and, having ascertained that the original of the picture really lived, and was English, and a duchess or a princess, which well she might be, but a girl of her own rank in life, young Brent was determined to find her and try to secure her for himself. The letter wound up in the ingenuous language, admitting the apparent absurdity of the

proceeding ; but protesting that the passion was true and deep, and that nothing could end it except realisation or absolute and ascertained hopelessness.

Rector Brent was a good-natured man and a kind father ; so he shook his head and smiled over his son's folly, being a sage himself. But he wrote a kind reply, saying that his son would be always welcome home under any conceivable circumstances, and that though he must confess the expedition seemed rather wild, yet he well knew that in the later scenes of the affair his son would be ruled by his own good sense and his father's counsel.

'And now,' the Rector said, as he sealed this praiseworthy epistle, 'I think before Percival comes home I had better have my affairs settled.' This he said, and as he spoke he looked at his own likeness in the chimney-glass. Something struck him. 'Dear me,' he exclaimed, 'I must get some new teeth!' For fifty years of good living had told upon this portion of his mechanism ; and now, reflecting that he was about to marry, he reasoned thus : 'At such times we refurnish our houses. Think of a man refurnishing his house, and not refurnishing his mouth ! If I am to have a new dining-table, I ought to have a new set of teeth to use at it. Besides—' He grinned in the glass. 'Yes,' he said, shaking his head, 'not at all prepossessing.' He grinned again, and this time by the power of fancy set new white teeth in the vacant spaces. 'Not a doubt of it,' he murmured ; 'the greatest improvement !'

So that morning, instead of making a proposal of marriage to the lively widow, he went to an adjacent town, where a notable dentist practised, and here he had his jaws overhauled and a plan of the projected improvements drawn out. The dentist was a man of chat, and when he ascertained whence the parson came, he had all sorts of questions to ask about various people in the neighbourhood, and curious stories to tell, and gossip to exchange ; so that our little Rector, perched in the operating chair, laughed and chirruped and looked the image of enjoyment. Short-sighted man !

'By the way,' said the dentist, pausing a moment with one of his tools in his hand, 'has not a Mrs. Temple settled in Kettlewell during the past year ?'

Rector Brent knew that a faint blush shot out on his cheek as he answered, 'Yes.'

'A remarkable woman !' the dentist continued, forgetting his task, while with a meditative face he seemed to contemplate bygone days. 'A very remarkable woman !'

'A very, *very* remarkable woman,' the Rector replied, determined to add an adverb in this very peculiar case.

'Wonderful energy,' said the dentist.

'Most wonderful!' the Rector rejoined, still
mentation principle.

'And such a face and figure!' the operator said

'Ah, *such* a face and figure!' repeated the Re
to refrain from rubbing his hands together.

'For her years,' the dentist remarked, in an
voice.

'O, come, come!' cried the Rector, in tones of re
'I don't see that. She is youthful, certainly, and
but still women are not old at forty-five.'

'At *what* five?' asked the dentist, not having
first word.

'Forty-five,' repeated the Rector, boldly and emp

'Seventy-five, more likely,' the blunt dentist said,
on his tool, which was out of repair.

'O, I see, I see!' cried Rector Brent; 'you are
her mother. We don't know the mother. The moth
live with them now.'

'Unless Mrs. Barbara Temple is herself and her
the same time, I am not talking of her mother,' the
answered. 'That lady is seventy years of age, if she is

Saying this with great unconcern, he advanced to
farther measurement of the clergyman's mouth, and ob
face of horror, he said reassuringly,

'Don't be uneasy; I am not going to take anythin

The Rector, gasping, waved him away. So convu
his movements that for a moment the dentist feared that
have left one of his minor implements in the patient
which implement, having been inadvertently swallowed,
its unaccommodating material and unusual shape, doing
to Nature in one or other of the canals which traverse t
continent.

'Do you mean to say,' said the astounded clergyman
'that Mrs. Barbara Temple—the lady who has th
daughters—is more than forty-five?'

'Before one of those young ladies was born,' the de
plied, little thinking how dreadful were his words, 'I
front tooth for Mrs. Temple—not Mrs. Temple then. S
remarkably handsome woman, something over forty—ju
of gray in her hair. I was not surprised when I hear
months after, that young Captain Temple was going to m
But I *was* a little surprised when I heard subsequently
wife was going to present him with a child; and when
that this child was followed by a second, and that by a
was, I confess, surprised not a little.'

'But Mrs. Temple was only about two-and-twenty w

married the second time,' the Rector said, still unable to credit what he heard.

'My dear sir,' the dentist said, laughing, 'I have known Mrs. Barbara Temple as a woman for five-and-forty years at the least. Let me see'—he went through some half-audible calculation—'I remember her jilting a man in seventeen hundred and ninety-five.'

'Then,' the Rector cried, leaping from the chair and smiting hand against hand till the room rang, 'I shall never believe anything in this world again except the three Creeds and the Ten Commandments. Nothing is to be trusted—not eyes nor ears nor the human reason. Forty-five—seventy-five! jilted a man in seventeen hundred and ninety-five! Why, then, she must remember the French Revolution! O dear, O dear, how very hot it has become!'

The reader who is observant and a student of his kind must have remarked that Nature now and then fashions a weakly sort of brain, which a single glass of small beer will baffle. In a similar way does that by no means infallible workwoman sometimes turn out a brain which cannot stand the shock of strange or disagreeable tidings. Rector Brent was for all practical purposes tipsy that afternoon. The disclosure had got into his head. It is true that his legs did not stagger, but his reason did. He did not know his right hand from his left, and was prepared to commit any blunder. While his mind was in a chaos of ideas that whirled round and about like leaves in an autumnal storm, he said to himself that something must be done. An insane something it was which he fixed upon. He would go straight to Mrs. Temple and tax her with dissimulation. The excited little gentleman never considered that the lady had not made any statement of her age with which she could be confronted. Nor did his preparation of impending absurdity stop here. Fully resolved as he had been to propose to the widow, and assured as he had felt that she both knew his intention and favourably regarded it, he quite forgot in his hurry of mind that he had never addressed her in the way of marriage. So he actually came before her in the posture of a betrayed suitor, and, as will be seen, he used language proper only to that particular part in the human comedy.

But this is leaping from chapter to chapter. As we close this one, let us simply mark our parson stepping out of his carriage at Mrs. Barbara Temple's door. His breath is hurried, his face is red, his manner is disordered. And we may be sure that these outward marks of confusion and annoyance convey only a very inadequate picture of the state of his reasoning faculties. These were indeed in that state of riot and darkness which in most cases is the acknowledged preliminary to Bedlam.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH THE REVEREND ANTHONY BRENT GETS AS GREAT A FALL
WROUGHT THE FINAL RUIN OF HUMPTY DUMPTY.

STICK, gloves, and hat all held in one hand, the already raised for the commencement of his speech, turbed clergyman broke into Mrs. Barbara Temple room. He saw what might have calmed his mind. girls were standing in a group admiring a drawing had just been buying, and their mother was deep in a girls looked up, and as the merry Rector was a favorite house, each fair face turned to smiles at sight of him ought to have melted the angry man into kindness, hence, mild or stern, could have quieted him just then 'Young ladies,' he said abruptly, addressing the three, 'my business is with your mother—alone.'

This odd intimation, considering the excited manner he made it, meant, they thought, one thing only. It vanished from the room, but even in going they glanced at each other; for the subject was so interesting they could not delay an exchange of ideas even till the side the door. The Rector was going to propose to Mrs.

Mamma thought so too. She was not often deceived by her eyes or her ears, but for once she fancied that in the Rector's voice, his flushed cheek, his alcoholic were signs of a lover's uneasiness. Indeed, as to this she without any hesitation explained it as arising from was still early in the afternoon, but Mrs. Barbara Temple not angry. Teetotalism was not yet fashionable, and a woman remarked to herself, 'They very often give the fillip in that way before coming to the point. Pity to overdo it;—and yet I don't know.'

The Rector might be flustered, but Mrs. Barbara Temple calm and pleasant. She motioned him to a seat—not her own sofa, but close to it; and then, laying down her head, turned upon him with her most gracious air.

Automatically (so we say in this scientific age) he fell, and, still to continue the scientific style, by the action of the law of gravitation, his hat, gloves, and cane, which he held, went their different ways to the floor. He did not rise, and Mrs. Temple began inly to compute how many times he must have taken.

'I hope he has not gone too far,' the prudent woman said to herself; and her hope grew less and less as the Rector rose, and with his red confused visage, saying nothing for quite a moment, Then he spoke.

'Mrs. Temple,' he said, 'I this morning received a tremendous lesson in the hollowness of the world!'

Mrs. Barbara Temple was not greatly skilled in metaphorical language, especially the pulpit sort; but as she knew that her visitor was not the sort of person to make researches into the interior of the physical globe, she had no great difficulty in understanding that he spoke of the human kind under this universal symbol.

'Well, well,' she said, shaking her head, 'that very often happens. The best thing is to be prepared for it. Don't expect too much of men and women, and you will learn to be good-humoured over their selfishness and hypocrisy. After all, are we much better ourselves? At any rate, let us keep our temper.'

She stroked her dress at these words, brushing off some imaginary dust, and looking up at the clergyman, she smiled.

'That,' the clergyman said solemnly, 'is a terribly frivolous view to take of so serious a subject.' Then, seeing the woman of the world elevate her eyebrows and smile more contemptuously than before, he added,

'Especially when the fault is our own.'

He looked at her so directly, and with such anger, that she was quite puzzled. This could not be the opening passage of an offer of marriage; and what could it be? Mrs. Temple, however, had faces and manners for all complications.

'Mr. Brent,' she said, with just the faintest sign of distance about her, such as could either be effaced or deepened according as the occasion required, 'I am afraid you are talking of something which I don't understand.'

'Mrs. Temple,' cried the over-excited little man, lashed up by his feeling so that he fancied himself a judge, and invested with a judge's rights, 'how old are you?'

For once in her cool self-possessed life Mrs. Temple was really dumbfounded. She looked at her visitor, but found no word to utter, and he, with an air of the most preposterous indignation and triumph, faced her, shaking his head, pursing his lips, and puffing at her in the most extraordinary style. At last she recovered herself. She was sorry to think it; but the Rector must be under the influence of wine.

'Mr. Brent,' she said, 'I think we had better take a walk in the garden.' She hoped in this quiet way to lead him to his carriage.

'No!' cried the hot little fellow, 'we shall not take a walk in the garden.' He sneered horribly as he repeated her words. 'You have deceived me, Mrs. Temple, shockingly!'

'Deceived you?' she cried, now with decided sternness in her voice. 'I am quite bewildered!'

'Is—it—not—true,' continued Mr. Brent, beating time to

each word, as if he were counting in a music-lesson, ‘t—jilt—ed—a—gen—tle—man—a—bout—the—time—French—Revolution?’ The astounding form of the and possibly some fact in her actual life which it brought memory, caused Mrs. Temple to change colour. But really too amazed to make any answer. Mr. Brent, a kind of drawing-room red Indian, and in the exact frame which these children of Nature begin to feel for their ‘And—did—you—not—lead—me—to—be—lieve—are—for—ty—five—and—no—more?’ he demonstrated by hitting his open palm as he emitted each monosyllable.

Amidst all her amazement Mrs. Temple could not know what style she ought to treat the man, and so, in her admirable composure, she made as if she would at the ring the bell.



‘Mr. Brent,’ she said severely, and she said no more. He looked striking; her diminutive well-knit figure opposite to his, which was in a funny posture, suggestive enough of tipsy; and her stern still face looking into his flushed and puffy.

‘You cannot deny it,’ he went on, a true illustration of the old saying, that whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad. He might even yet have saved himself, if he would have fairly noted her aspect; but still he believed she trembled before him. ‘Under that false impression I was actually going to marry you, in fact I might have married you, and not for the truth till all was over!’

Mrs. Temple had by this time begun to get an inkling of the whole truth, and now, like the general she was, she prepared to crush the enemy. First she stretched out her hand imperiously and signing to a small armchair,

'Sit down there,' she said.

Amazed in his turn, but quailing already, Mr. Brent obeyed. How he got safely seated is a mystery, for he never looked at the chair, nor lifted his eyes from her.

'When you first came into this room,' she said, in more imperious tones than before, 'I thought you were drunk. The next minute I thought you were mad. It took a little longer to show me that you are neither, but only impertinent.'

The little man gazed up at her open-mouthed, like a dying fish. All the strength of his fury was gone.

'How dare you ask me my age?' she now demanded, driving the question into him like a dagger. He, realising for the first time his own absurdity, made no answer.

'When did I tell you I was forty-five?' she asked, changing to a cold sarcastic tone. 'Tell me.'

'Well,' he stammered, 'I don't exactly know; but everybody said that was your age, and—and I'—he scratched his head with a pitiable air—'I supposed you must have told them.'

'O, then it seems it was not I that said so?'

'O no; it was not you.'

He made this admission eagerly, to show that he was ready to be civil. She went on, growing colder as he grew more confused.

'You spoke of marrying me; had you ever asked me?'

'No; I had not,' he replied, with a dismal expression of consternation. 'But I—I—I—fancied—'

'You fancied that you are so engaging that the only question is whether you ask or not. The lady's reply would be like the vote of thanks at your missionary meetings—it would go by acclamation.'

He hung his head. It was a new experience in life for poor Mr. Brent to have to sit silently by while the demonstration that he was an ass was quietly and logically worked out.

'Now, Mr. Brent,' she said calmly, 'let me enlighten you. You are an amusing chatterer, and you have a position in this place. I did not object to know you, and to be on easy terms with you. But as to marrying you, I should not have done it—not if you had knelt at my feet for a year. You are not agreeable to me. I don't think you would be agreeable to many women. You might find some who would marry you for your money; I tell you candidly I don't think you will ever meet a woman, be she twenty-five, or forty-five, or seventy-five, who would marry you for yourself.'

'Mrs. Temple,' the miserable man said, now thoroughly abashed, 'I feel I have made a great blunder. Had I not better bring this visit to an end?'

'Not unless you wish it,' she answered. 'We can change the subject, that will be sufficient.'

It was the quintessence of contempt, and reduced station of a buzzing fly, which need not be killed if it make itself disagreeable.

She rang the bell, and until the servant appeared as the clergyman to enjoy his situation in silence.

'Send the young ladies here,' she said.

Poor little Mr. Brent hung his head low indeed, as he came back. Suppressed fun and curiosity were in their nature; but schooled in self-possession by their mother, careful to appear as far as possible unconcerned.

'Girls,' the little lady said, looking upon them with a fire, 'Mr. Brent has been here on a curious mission.'

He looked up at her, appealing for mercy, and she met his look with an expression which he believed denoted that he was out of the question.

'He has been interested about an old woman in the parish of whom he heard much that was favourable. He was going to make her a parish annuitant; but, fortunately, before he committed himself he was told certain facts about her. He learned that she had misconducted herself at the time of the French Revolution, was it not, Mr. Brent?'

He could not answer. He looked at her, petrified and silent.

'Mr. Brent has been very cautious,' she went on; 'but he has not told me the name of this old woman. I don't really care for girls, her history—or the business Mr. Brent called about her concerns you at all. But still I thought I would like to ask you if you have heard of any old woman in this parish who is very old, and tries to seem very young, who misconducted herself at the time of the French Revolution?'

'Never heard of her,' the wondering girls called out together. 'Don't you know her name?'

'You see, girls,' she answered, 'Mr. Brent is so very cautious, that he never makes a blunder. He can hear everything and say nothing. As I said, it does not concern you, but he has said either, only Mr. Brent thought it did. We shall not say the matter again. Now, Mr. Brent, shall we have our walk in the garden?'

He rose with them, trying to find a word which might save him from the part she assigned him; but none came. As they descended the flight of steps into the grounds he made an effort to whisper in her ear, '*You are the cleverest woman I ever met.*'

She turned upon him with a look full of meaning.

'My good man,' she whispered back, in accents of the utmost scorn, 'don't trouble yourself to say what I am. *You are a fool!*'

(*To be continued.*)

THE ROMANCE OF BANKING.

If we look at banking on the practical side, it appears to be a very literal and prosaic business ; but there is such a thing as the poetry of wealth, a certain amount of imaginativeness and romance that clings to day-book and ledger, and an infinite amount of adventure and incident such as must belong to all human interests, even when they possess the solidarity of banking. Indeed, as one reads the records of banking which are scattered about in various publications—books, lives, evidence, Hansard, magazine literature—the impression of solidarity wears off ; the changes and chances become apparent ; love, ambition, madness, rascality, intrigue, adventure, come out as conspicuously as in the cognate fields of war, law, and politics. Modern fiction has been especially fond of dealing with bankers—we remember the Newcomes of Thackeray and the Sidonia of Lord Beaconsfield—but, as usual, real life leaves fiction far behind, and authentic history transcends the legendary and fabulous.

Then the business of banking extends through an immense gamut, using all the scales. Sometimes the bankers are the companions, in some cases almost the equals, and in others more than the equals, of princes ; and at the other end they are pawn-brokers and retailers. There is Fuggers entertaining Charles V., and burning all his bills as a more than royal present ; and there is Jemmy Wood of Gloucester dispensing cheese and small

groceries across the bank counter. There are Baring and Goldsmid helping Pitt ; and the Rothschilds, of truly catholic mind, helping every one whose security is indisputable. Think of Nathan Rothschild hovering one day over the outskirts of the field of Waterloo, if that celebrated banking legend be true, and a day or two after leaning in deep dejection against one of the pillars of the Royal Exchange, as if the English had lost the battle ! Then we have the two great banking heiresses of our time, the heiress of the house of Coutts and the heiress of the house of Jones, Loyd, & Co., whose matrimonial fortunes have in their time excited such a keen interest in London society. Even the Old Lady of Threadneedle-street has had her adventures at times. She has had her confabulations with Ministries and her conflicts with joint-stock companies. On a certain disastrous evening, unless some boxes of old one-pound notes had turned up, the venerated old lady must have breathed her last. One tradesman is able to found a bank because farmers, afraid of highwaymen, insist on leaving their ready money at his house. Another banker is enriched because deposits, never called for, are swept into his private coffers. Now and then an immense forgery is made upon a bank ; and once or twice a burglary upon a colossal scale is achieved, and a great deal of loot is taken away. One great banker, Henry Fauntleroy, is found guilty, on the evi-

dence of his own handwriting, of having committed forgery to the extent of hundreds of thousands of pounds; and a whole firm, Strahan, Paul, and Bates, go off into penal servitude. A number of tragic stories may be told of banks that have destroyed themselves by reckless speculations, and others that have been causelessly destroyed by insensate irrational 'runs on the bank.' One great banker, Samuel Rogers, is a poet and a very prince of conversation-alists; another, like George Grote, is a wonderful Greek scholar and a very prince of historians; another, like Prescott, becomes a great authority in literature and history; another, like Sir John Lubbock, is in the very highest ranks of statesmen and men of science. Moreover, it is a popular mistake that banks are limited to the hardest, driest, and most practical details. The liberality of banks, and the delicacy with which that liberality has been dispensed, are proverbial; and there are some banks that have actually failed owing to an excess of generosity to their customers. We believe that even this scanty collection of instances, some of which we will presently expound, will suffice to prove that there is such a thing as the Romance of Banking.

We have all of us heard that Lombard-street was so called from the Longobards, who first brought banking into London, 'city of ships;' meaning by these Longobards, the Italian merchants of Venice, Genoa, Lucca, and Florence.* It may, however, be safely assumed that the children of Israel anticipated even the Longobards in these

* The word *bank*, it should be observed, is a German word; *Banck*, signifying a heap, a common stock or fund. Lord Bacon, in his essay on *Usury*, uses the word in the above sense.

transactions. We have said that we have an banking in the time of who 'lodged with one tanner.' In the last volume published of *Bampton Lectures* the Rev. Mr. Hatch, 'The bishops and pre early days kept banks, medicine, wrought smiths, tended sheep, or goods in open market. existing enactments of e cils on the point are the are not to huckster the from market to market they to use their positio cheaper and sell dearer th people.' Up to the pres many persons carry on th ing in combination wi kinds of business. At sent moment one may Twinings' bank and b good tea across the Many other banks beside ings have begun with t ing.

The great business people have been goldsmiths speedily and naturally developed into bankers. Bank-note from receipts for goods or deposited with the gold and eventually these notes lated freely like money from to hand. Banks, however omnivorous of business. purchase or come into poss of all sorts of properties. become owners of railways; build docks, warehouses, whole towns, canals, martories, mines, &c. For inst the firm of the Barings bought an immense territory surrou the lake, on an island of w the city of Mexico is built. firm thought it best to get r their purchase. The West England Bank, very much to t discomfiture, became largely terested in one of the Glamor

shire coal mines. The Thellusson property got into the Court of Chancery, whence it was very skilfully manipulated, and all its intended growth entirely stunted. It is said that the banker's wife died of a broken purse. Mr. Frederick Martin, in his *Banking Sketches*, mentions the case of the famous Jemmy Wood, the miser, of Gloucester, as a parallel case of a great property dissipated through litigation. Mr. Martin, however, is not quite accurate. A considerable proportion of that property came into possession of Sir Matthew Wood, the father of the ex-Lord Chancellor, Lord Hatherley, who closed his long and honoured career only the other day. Lord Hatherley has obligingly informed the present writer that his father was no relation at all to the 'Jemmy Wood' of Gloucester; he had a great respect for the illustrious alderman's character, and there was an entire similarity in their political opinions. In the recent *Life of Lord Campbell* we read: 'My greatest fee, while at the bar, was for arguing the case before the Privy Council on the will of James Wood, of Gloucester—one thousand guineas, with very large refreshers. Since I left the bar, my client, who succeeded, has made me a present of a candelabrum worth as much. The stake for which we contended was above a million.'

A curious interest attaches to Jemmy Wood's bank. It was the oldest private bank in the country, and its site is now one of those joint-stock banks which are the marvel of modern times. A hundred years ago all the banks were private banks, except the Bank of England. Yet that acute thinker, Adam Smith, had declared his appreciation of such banks long before they were

formed. 'The constitution of joint-stock companies,' he wrote in the *Wealth of Nations*, 'renders them in general more tenacious of established rules than any private co-partnership. Such companies, therefore, seem extremely fitted for this trade.' For a long time, however, their number was extremely limited, and they could not be carried on within sixty-five miles of London. The site of Wood's famous bank is now occupied by the Gloucester branch of the National Provincial Bank of England. This is now one of the most famous banks in the country, and has a remarkable history belonging to it. Like many great undertakings, it did not prosper much at first. Several of the local banks of this great corporation did not prove remunerative, and were given up. It will be remembered that this was also the case with some of the branches established by the Bank of England itself. The Bank of England established one of its first branches at Gloucester; but it did not pay, and was given up. In course of time the National Provincial, second only to the London and Westminster, has made its way, and the land, so to speak, is covered by a network of its branches. The report of last year, now before us, gives enormous figures. The subscribed capital is twelve millions. The total assets are close upon thirty-three millions. The dividend distributed was nineteen per cent, free of income-tax. A sort of special interest clings to the Gloucester branch that has taken the renowned place of Jemmy Wood's; and we have reasons for knowing that the best traditions of banking are carried out by this great company, and that liberality and skill are combined with the severest fiscal principles.

The most primitive kind of banking was carried on by this Jemmy Wood in Westgate-street, Gloucester. He kept a shop which, in some respects, was little better than a common chandler's shop; but, as in the case of the modern 'emporium,' everything was sold, 'from a mouse-trap to a carriage.' He carried on his business as a banker at one end of the shop, and the whole establishment was managed by himself and two clerks or assistants. Many are the celebrated banks that have arisen from the most lowly beginnings. In primitive times the landlord of the inn often turned his bar into a kind of clearing-house for the convenience of his customers. The rise of a great banking-house in the north is identified with the history of Mr. Thomas Mottram, who kept a house-of-call on Cockpit-hill, Manchester, or rather it was his wife's bank. People used to call it, not Mr., but Mrs. Mottram's. Whenever customers came in they always went direct to the lady, who kept the keys and took charge of the moneys. Mottram, a small, quiet, easy-going man, always stood with his back to the fire, and his shoulders against the mantelpiece. He and his wife lived to drive down every morning to his own bank, in his own carriage, drawn by a pair of beautiful bays. There has been an interesting picture drawn of the interior of a very famous bank. 'At no time, perhaps, did the famous old place present an aspect more thoroughly ingenerate, self-contained, and characteristic than in the depths of winter, when lighted up, as was the custom, even long after the general employment of gas, with its well-remembered huge dip candles, standing each in a sort of thin pyramid filled with sand.' The

history of the rise of Smith, Payne, & Co. is similar to that of the Bank of England. There was a draper in the counties who had a reputation among the farmers. It was in the heart of Sherwood Forest, and was at this time a great alarm, not ill founded, the subject of highwaymen. They used to leave their carriages to the draper, who, with a fine instinct, hit upon the principles of finance—of buying ready money, and of giving moderation, on security, to who wanted it. When he refused to allow interest to his money largely flowed to him, and Mr. Smith was a regular banker. He opened a second bank at Lincoln, a third at Hull, and, in connection with Mr. I. in London, established another business in that city. The Minister made the head of the house a peer, and a wag, his seat at High Wycombe, on his door:

'Bobby Smith lives here;
Billy Pitt made him a peer,
And took the pen from behind

Many are the stories of the adventures and perils of banking in the old times. If their customers feared robbers, they might have been the same with equal or greater success. Here is the story of an attempt to rob a banker's clerk. We take it from Lawson's *History of Banking*.

'At the latter end of the year 1825, and during the passage, a clerk was despatched from a bank in Lombard-street with 10,000 in notes, for the relief of a co-banker in Norfolk. The clerk travelled by the mail-coach, and the notes were done up in a blue bag. On leaving London he was pleased to find himself alone in the coach with such a valuable parcel.'

Stratford two men, muffled in great-coats, got in, and immediately began making remarks aloud, and whispering to each other about the parcel. The clerk, who was beginning to get very nervous, began to whistle, and pretended to be very merry. "You seem very merry, but surely you can put your parcel on the seat; it must be very valuable, or you would not hug it in the way you do." On his refusal to do this, their manner instantly changed; and the clerk began to think they knew the contents of the parcel he was carrying, and meant to murder him and run off with it. He was confirmed in his suspicion when he heard one of them say, "Not yet; wait till we get out of Baintree." On arriving at that place he got out of the coach; for he felt that he could go no further in such company, and insisted upon being shown to the house of the banker, who was in bed. Directly he saw him he threw the parcel at his feet, exclaiming, "Thank God it is safe!" and immediately fainted. It was afterwards ascertained that the men, who were unknown in that part of the country, got out of the coach about three miles from Baintree, not stopping at a village or even a house. On alighting they swore dreadfully at the guard, and walked away. It was then about one o'clock in the morning.'

The well-known story of 'The Box of Spanish Juice' may also be given:

'A Liverpool banker, who was in the habit of collecting defaced notes, used to send them up to London every fortnight in a box. He usually collected about 1000*l.* a week, so that the box generally contained about 2000*l.* This method of sending the notes to town

was adopted to save postage; also, to deceive any thieves who might be on the look-out for plunder, the banker wrote on it, in legible letters, "Spanish Juice." It was always directed to a chemist in Plough-court, Lombard-street, who regularly, every morning after its arrival, handed it over to the banker's clerk, who invariably called for it. But one Monday morning it arrived the same as usual, to all appearances, but, on being opened, was found to contain nothing but shavings. At some stage of its journey the box must have been opened, and the notes abstracted. On inquiry it was found that the box arrived safely at the inn, and was placed with other packages, which had come by the same conveyance, in a room ostensibly guarded by a watchman. It is supposed that, during the absence of this functionary, the thief or thieves committed the robbery. This was afterwards found to be true, although it was stated that the watchman had connived at it.'

Those, indeed, were fine old-fashioned days, which have altogether altered. There was then a nice distinction, now altogether obliterated, between the east and west of Temple Bar. The old-fashioned banker used to go to his office so punctually that you might set a town clock by him. When he dined at club or hostel he used to observe the manners of his customers, and, if he thought them extravagant, he showed them little mercy in 'the shop' or the 'sweating-room.' He would stay in the office till the accounts were balanced; and we have known of clerks being kept up for hours until the error of a penny could be rectified. Old Simeon of Cambridge gave a man 20*l.* to detect the error of a penny in his accounts. The old-fashioned

bankers were the men who kept up to the last the powder and pig-tail, the top-boots and knee-breeches. The half-holiday was an institution totally unknown. The country bankers sent up to town heavy parcels by Pickford's vans, a guard with a blunderbuss keeping watch over them. In those days of expensive postage it was a great object to send letters by private hands. A Manchester bank calculated that it saved the pay of two clerks by this system. If any of their customers were found to have booked places at the coach-offices it was soon arranged that they should take letters to town. Sir Rowland Hill's innovations have nowhere been more efficacious than in the province of banking. The banker in old times never concerned himself with literature. He would be regarded as going to professional perdition. He would be looked upon as the Cambridge candidate for honours who falls in love or betakes himself to poetry. When the news came to Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough that a young banker named Rogers had just published a poem on 'The Pleasures of Memory,' he exclaimed, 'If old Gozzy'—alluding to the respected head of the firm with which he was banking—'ever so much as says a good thing, let alone writing, I will close my account with him the next morning!'

An absurd story is told of an old banker, of a single pint of porter being invariably placed at the bottom of his staircase for his laundress. In course of time the pint was exchanged for a pot. A customer forthwith remonstrated with him: 'I must say, sir, that if you go on *doubling your expenditure* at that rate, it may be time for your customers to look after their balances.' The leg-and

goes that the banker accepted the rebuke, an amendment. The banking has considerably since the old days. A of the small banking absorbed by the sav The banks do not con selves with the person of their customers as It is to be said that, London banks are most with bills, the old gen ing business is chiefly by the country banks proportion of the custo matically overdraw. A witness, being examine court, stated that he ha at six or seven banks. the use of banking at places' asked the ju overdraw, my lord,' wa did reply. In old days drawing was only dom security and for specia Old Lefevre, the fath famous Speaker, a prin ner in Curries & Co., i overdrawing customer at ter, and gave him a lect Smith, you and I must u one another somethi than we seem to do. I you don't know what be give me leave to tell y my business to take car money; but I find that always taking care of *mi* that is not banking, M it must be the other the banker, not you. Yc stand me now, Mr. S sure you do.' Where the disputably large properti is always forthcoming. 'I have got five thousand in my bank, or whethe them five thousand, I do exactly know,' said a larg friend one day; 'but first, that, if I owe t money, they will get good

and next, I know that they know far more about my property than I do myself.'

A very instructive history might be written of the battles of banks. A whole volume might easily be devoted to the history of the Bank of England. Of that dreadful December of 1825, Mr. Harman said: 'The timely issue of the one-pound notes worked wonders, and it was by great good luck that we had the means of doing it; for it happened that an old box, containing a quantity of one-pound notes, had been overlooked, and they were forthcoming at the lucky moment. This, as far as my judgment goes, saved the country.' The state of affairs is thus described by the Deputy-Governor of the Bank: 'On Monday morning the storm began, and till Saturday night it raged with an intensity that it is impossible for me to describe; on the Saturday night it had somewhat abated. The Bank had taken a fierce and deliberate resolution to make common cause with the country, as far as their humble efforts would go; and on Saturday night, it was my happiness, when I went up to the Cabinet, reeling with fatigue, to be able just to call out to my Lord Liverpool, and to the members of his Majesty's Government, then present, that all was well. Then, in the following week, things began to get a little more steady; and by the 24th, what with the one-pound notes that had gone out and other things, people began to be satisfied; and then it was, for the first time in a fortnight, that those who had been busied in that terrible scene could recollect that they had families who had some claim on their attention.' There are few banks which have not in their time weathered fierce storms, and not a few that have

succumbed to them. Even the great house of Jones, Loyd, & Co. once suspended payment, but it was only for a single day. Very often a banking house has been shaken to its foundation by a conspiracy, or some vile combination. The fall of the Agra & Masterman Bank, in 1866, is supposed to have been brought about by malice. There are many stories of a similar kind in banking literature. The history of panics would be a very curious one, and not reflect very much credit on panic-stricken communities. Sometimes bankers themselves have closed their doors in a fit of panic. Thus we read: 'The complexion of the larger accounts, three or four of which were a great deal overdrawn, so alarmed Mr. Crewdson, that he insisted on winding up. Nothing availed, and he closed the doors. There was no failure for stoppage, no rumour of anything wrong; the business was simply discontinued; every demand was met; every account discharged in full.' Another remarkable incident of a similar kind was when the Consolidated Bank stopped in May 1866. The bank was at the time perfectly solvent. The *Times* said it was 'one of the most extraordinary errors ever committed by men of business intrusted with the property of others.' After six weeks' suspension the bank was reopened, every demand being met, with interest. One bank was lost in a very curious way. Two of the directors went up to the Bank of England, and took with them one hundred thousand pounds in securities in a carpet-bag. In some extraordinary way the valuable bag was lost. It was recovered, indeed, with the precious contents untouched; but in the mean time an irreparable mischief had been done. It is curious to note

how there are dim portents and presages, the vaguest of vague rumours, the rising of a little cloud no larger than a man's hand, a slight rise in the price of corn, a slight fall in the value of securities, and then the genius of the astute financier comes to the front; he steers safely amid the rocks and reefs; he saves his own capital, and, if we may be excused the repetition of some absurd puns, like Pharaoh's daughter, he even finds a little profit by the rushes on the bank.

In times of severe panic people have been known to refuse Bank of England notes, and prefer local notes. In country districts of Scotland, the old one-pound notes were greatly preferred to sovereigns. It is said that when there was a run upon the Bank of England in 1765, the device was resorted to of paying the country people in shillings and sixpences. One acute Manchester firm painted all their premises profusely, and many dapper gentlemen were deterred from approaching the counter. A story is told of Cunliffe Brook's bank. When there was an impetuous and unreasoning rush for gold, Mr. Brook obtained a number of sacks of meal, opened them at the top, put a good thick layer of coin upon the contents, then placed them untied where the glittering coins would be manifest to all observers. One bank procured a number of people as confederates, to whom they paid gold; then slipped round again to a back door and refunded it, and thus the effect of a stage army was produced. At another bank, the chief cashier himself examined every note with the most searching scrutiny, holding it up to the light, testing the signature, and making believe that, on account of alarm as to forgery, there was

need of the most scrupulous examination. When he had completed the examination, the note to one of the bankers very deliberately and slowly said, 'I will pay it.' Other bankers, to pay the money very deliberately, counting it twice over, and then saying, 'I am sure the sum was right, but I will give a sovereign short, and the customer should come back and the counting have to be done over again. At one o'clock measures were placed in the window of the street, a pile of gold sovereigns, after the manner of the old times, exposed to sale at a low price in the summer. At a certain hour the coin was heated in the fire in the parlour and handed out as 'the temperature of 300° Fahrenheit.' The clerk in charge, according to his phraseology, then cried out loudly every five minutes, 'Now, Jim, do be getting your sovereigns; folks are waiting for their money.' 'Coming,' was the ready answer, and the 'folk' thought the production boundless. In such ways the simple-minded and uninformed who come to such occasions the chief of the throng, just as the people go to extremes are the excited ones. The crowd was persuaded—the proof of the pudding was in the eating—that the right was burning their fingers.

We will now take a look at the romantic personal side of the business. I do not know what bank was meant by the Neuchâtel banker, but I do not say that he ever was so kind as to know. He drew his traits, and would blur his name once with the deliberate

* Grindon's *Manchester Bankers*. (Manchester: Palmer, 1877.)

of making them indistinct. In some respects the Neuchatels are like the Rothschilds, but in others like the Thellussons. He speaks of the jewels and treasures deposited with the Neuchatels at the time of the French Revolution by alarmed proprietors and capitalists in other European States. 'The Neuchatels thus had the command for a quarter of a century, more or less, of adventitious millions. They were scrupulous and faithful stewards; but they were doubtless repaid for their vigilance, their anxiety, and often their risk, by the opportunities which these rare resources permitted them to enjoy.' Disraeli showed the nation the kind of banking operation by which such people as the Neuchatels make their money. When he bought for the country the shares in the Suez Canal the Rothschilds advanced the necessary millions; and for this operation, which did not involve the slightest risk, they received more than eighty thousand pounds. The great statesman, at the same time, did a fine financial stroke for his country, worthy of any banker; for Mr. Gladstone was able to state in the House of Commons lately that those four millions were now worth double the money to the country in the open market.

The firm of Jones, Loyd, & Co. has a very romantic history. This bank is now amalgamated with the London and Westminster. It may be said to have commenced in a love affair between a young Dissenting minister of Manchester and the daughter of a leading member of his congregation. Mr. James Loyd preached so eloquently in his Welsh chapel that Mary Jones fell in love with him. Her father was a great man at the Welsh chapel, being both banker and manufacturer. On one occa-

sion he, or some other merchant, was so pleased with the young preacher, that he presented him with a five-pound note; and the minister, in thanking him, said he would be happy to pray for him on the same terms every Sunday morning. The young people, fearing that the father's consent could not be secured, were secretly married. The father-in-law was reconciled to them; but he thought that he could do a better thing for his new son-in-law than let him continue in the preaching business. Nonconformist ministers have a great advantage over the Anglican clergy, in that they may go into trade or business, or sit in Parliament if elected. Mr. Loyd became his father-in-law's partner, and went to London to open a metropolitan branch of the business. He proved to be the very man for a banker—eminently sagacious, clear-headed, and honourable. The Manchester firm regularly drew on the London firm; and for some years 'Jones upon Jones' was a well-known commercial phrase. For many years he was the head of the business, which was transferred in 1864 to the most wealthy bank in the country, the London and Westminster, that led the way in those joint-stock enterprises which Sir Robert Peel declared formed one of the greatest discoveries of modern times. In 1844 Lewis Loyd had purchased Overstone Park, four miles north-east of Northampton—a thousand or fifteen hundred acres—where he resided until 1858. He bequeathed three millions of money, the result of banking and of successful speculations in Government stock. He left an only son, Samuel Jones Loyd, who was, two years afterwards, made Lord Overstone. This nobleman is the greatest living authority upon the subject of

banking. The study of his publications and of his evidence before parliamentary committees is most interesting and instructive. 'Since Ricardo,' writes M'Culloch, 'no writer upon currency has combined the same wide range of theoretical and practical information as Lord Overstone, or has been so well able to detect plausible fallacies, and to elicit and illustrate true principles, however obscured by sophistry, prejudice, or interest.' In the well-known work, *Great Governing Families of England*, by Messrs. Sanford and Hatton, the author writes: 'The chief of the new commercial aristocracy is supposed to be Lord Overstone, one of the wealthiest subjects in the world, his fortune being estimated at five millions.' An only son himself, he had an only daughter, married to Colonel Loyd-Lindsay. An interesting letter from the present Lord Overstone, written soon after his accession to the business, has found its way into print. He gave the clerks of his establishment a present of a thousand pounds. Very often the faithful servants of a bank have a kind of feudal loyalty to their chief. The bankers, indeed, have done good service in discrediting the miserable idea of their clerks being so many 'hands.' They have shown examples of that best kind of co-operation, where the chiefs and dependents work harmoniously together, often meeting in neighbourly fashion at the great man's house; and the instances are not rare in which the faithful servant, who recalls Eliezer of Damascus, has been admitted as partner into some share of the business which has largely prospered under his care.

The house of Coutts & Co. has a very interesting history. A very great banking heiress is the

Baroness Burdett-Coutts recent marriage with Coutts-Bartlett excited attention. The kindred Baroness is—or recently—the head of a banking firm of Coutts & Co. was popularly supposed to be a hundred thousand pounds worth the business. Mr. Coutts, for his second wife, Miss actress, to whom he left a fortune—about a million—Mrs. Coutts, left a married the Duke of St. Albans in her marriage settlement a vast fortune was left her own power. She wished that she would bestow the wishes of her husband made the money, by lending it to his favourite grandchild Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts, daughter of the famous St. John's. An infinite amount of 'has wandered, Heaven to the poor.' Child's once represented by a became Countess of land, and afterwards by her, who became Countess. On certain state Lady Jersey dined with officials, and took the high table.

The history of Coutts & Co. shows how much may be done by a discriminating hand. Old Coutts heard, one dinner-party, from the mouth of a City bank, that a nobleman applied to his house for a loan of thirty thousand pounds, which had been refused. At ten o'clock at night he started for the house, and saw his steward explained his business, and that if the nobleman would upon him the next morning might have whatever he wanted. On the next morning, when the noble lord called at the house, Mr. Coutts handed him

notes of a thousand pounds each. 'What security do you want?' asked the peer. 'I shall be satisfied with your note-of-hand,' was the reply. This was given; and the nobleman said, 'I shall only want for the present ten thousand pounds of the money; so I will leave twenty thousand pounds with you, and open an account.' Some time afterwards the nobleman sold an estate for two hundred thousand pounds, which he deposited with Coutts's. Nor was this all. He told the anecdote to his friends, and also to George III. The King was so impressed with the story that he himself deposited a large sum with Mr. Coutts. The King withdrew his patronage, however, when Coutts supported Sir Francis Burdett in his contest for Middlesex with immense sums, and transferred his account to another banker, who failed; and we cannot help thinking that in this instance his Majesty was served quite right.

The Barings have been among the most famous of English bankers. They are of German stock. There is a kind of ecclesiastical flavour about them. Their English founder was a Bremen pastor, who settled in this country. His grandson married the niece of an English archbishop. One of his descendants became Bishop of Durham. The money was originally made in the rich profitable clothing business of the west of England. Going into the old-fashioned church of the pleasant Devonshire town of Ashburton one day, we were greatly interested by the Baring monuments. Ashburton gave a title in the peerage to the chief of the house of Baring. It has been a rule in the house that when any one of them has got a title he goes out of the business. Sir Francis Baring, the first great banker, who, dying

in 1810, left a fortune of two millions, had three sons—Thomas, Alexander, and Henry. Thomas, succeeding to the baronetcy, gave up the business. Henry had rather a romantic reputation as a lucky gambler, who was frequently able to break the bank of a gambling-table. He was the amazement of beholders, when he would sit down at a gambling-table at the Palais Royal—before such tables were happily abolished—with piles of gold and notes before him. The reputation of a successful gambler was hardly suited to the intense respectability of the firm, and Mr. Henry was induced to retire from the business. Alexander Baring, often known as 'Alexander the Great,' sustained and extended the fortunes of the house. He went to America; and there the richest banker in England married the daughter of the richest citizen of the United States. One of his gigantic transactions possesses an historical importance. After the conclusion of the great European war he paid down a sum of 1,100,000*l.*, by which France was freed from the occupation of Russian, Austrian, and German armies. 'There are six great Powers in Europe,' said the Duc de Richelieu—'England, France, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Baring Brothers.' In 1835 he was made Lord Ashburton. Two of his sons held the title, and each successively retired from the business. The head of the firm, Thomas Baring, became Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Melbourne's ministry; and another member, Lord Northbrook, has been Governor-General of India.

The account of the fortunes of the Barclays' Bank is very interesting. They are descended from the famous and intrepid Quaker, whose *Apology* for his order is one

of the most celebrated of our severer classica. David Barclay, a linendraper in Cheapside, established his brother Robert as a banker in Lombard-street. That house in Cheapside was a famous one in its day; it was the house from the windows of which members of the Royal Family used to watch the procession on Lord Mayor's-day. This was the case with no fewer than six reigning sovereigns, from Charles II. to George III. The son of the famous Quaker had received the three first Georges. There is a very pretty letter in existence from a daughter of David Barclay, describing the reception of the Royal Family in the counting-house, which had been turned into a parlour. Another version of the Barclay connection with Royalty is, that the King went in state to the City on a Lord Mayor's-day, and one of the horses of the royal carriage became quite unmanageable in Cheapside, opposite the shop of Barclay the linendraper. The worthy Quaker, perceiving this, descended into the street, and said, 'Wilt thou alight, George and thy wife Charlotte, and come into my house and view the Mayor's Show?' When the King left his house he said, 'David, let me see thee at St. James's next Wednesday; and bring thy son Robert with thee.' When David Barclay and his son Robert approached the royal presence, the King descended from his throne and gave his Quaker friend a hearty shake of the hand. The King asked David what he intended to do with his son, and said, 'Let him come to me, and I will provide him with honourable and profitable employment.'

The Quaker. 'I fear the air of the Court of your Majesty would not agree with my son.'

The King. 'Well, David, well, you know best, you know best;

but you must not omit to see you occasionally at St. J

The banking proved as able and profitable as any element which the King could give. It may be said that Quakers seem a people of aptitude for banking. They port each other, and also win public support. It is curious to observe how often bankers' talk falls into cliques. Some are especially in territorial tastes; others in trades; others in Levantine business; others in man and Egyptian interest so on through all the cycle of the countries.

The firm of Thellusson was a very famous one. This was, I believe, the firm which Dickenson has in mind, in the Telfson Bank, his *Tale of Two Cities*. The bank had a very close connection with Paris. An immense number of the customers were French. Thellusson had belonged to the Paris firm of Thellusson & Necker, first clerk and a partner in the business, the great financial minister, whose wife was the first love of Edward Gibbon. He migrated to London and established a bank, which grew up to vast proportions in connection with the Paris market. The will of Peter Thellusson was one of the most memorable of documents. After leaving his fortunes to his wife and sons and daughters, he directed his property to accumulate until his descendants should become, under certain conditions, the most plentiful of private individuals. Among such descendants, there was to go to pay off the National Debt. It is only fair to say that we have heard of an explanation which would go a considerable way towards giving a different version of Thellusson's character and bequest. Many of his

tomers were *émigrés*, or unfortunate nobles who had perished by the guillotine in Paris. Great obscurity hung over the fate of many, and it was uncertain how far they or their representatives might turn up to claim deposits. Thellusson's desire was that there should be abundant funds to satisfy every such claim to the utmost. On the other hand, it may be argued that it was simply the design of the old banker to make the ultimate possessor of his bequest the richest man in the world. He was to have inherited at least twenty millions. The annual income, however, was pretty generally divided among the lawyers; and an Act of Parliament has rendered any such accumulations very nearly impossible.

The field of history and anecdote opened up by banking involves the subject of cheques, a favourite topic with John Stuart Mill, which alone needs a paper. Sometimes a cheque may be presented which would more than exhaust the available cash in the bank, which a judicious manager would of course desire to keep as low as possible. We have known, for instance, of a cheque being given for nearly half a million of money. A cheque, however large, and however unexpected, causes no embarrassment to a good house that is prepared against all contingencies. What the banker does is simply to write a cheque of his own upon the Bank of England. We will at this point advert to one or two principles which underlie the whole system of banking in our days.

Indeed it may be said that all the principles of banking lie pretty well in a nutshell. A few axioms and postulates determine the whole science. Notes are not money; they are only the repre-

sentatives of value. Indeed we may say paradoxically that even money is not money; gold is the representative of labour. The bank-note simply represents gold. It is simply the representative of a representative. Gold itself is only a commodity, like corn, wine, or wool, or any other commodity. All the disasters of banking have been caused by losing sight of this simple economical law. The business of a banker is the most profitable, and in some ways the easiest of businesses. He is the only business man who lives on the profits, not of his own business, but of the business of other people. He is the guardian, not of his own money, but of the money of other people. There are a number of people who delight in making heavy deposits with their bankers. They like the idea of a heavy floating balance. People might be mentioned who like to have a hundred thousand pounds at their bankers'. The banker knows that only a certain amount is necessary for his purposes, and he trades upon the balance. His whole system is a trade upon balances. So it comes to pass that the whole successful conduct of a bank depends much more upon moral power than upon intellectual ability. In the long-run good principle everywhere surpasses mere ability, and this is especially the case in banking. Honour is the very breath of its life.

The history of financing sufficiently shows what rocks ahead there are in finance. There is no doubt but liberality is the great rock ahead of many bankers. Every banker receives applications for assistance, which, from a business point of view, are entirely unacceptable. No banker ought to allow kindly personal feeling to get the better of his judgment. He is not only deal-

ing with his own profits, but he is also the trustee of the money of other people. He should have nothing to do with 'bulls,' 'bears,' and 'lame ducks.' He should set his face against every speculation which does not partake of the nature of an investment. He must learn that most difficult of all arts, the art of saying 'No!' It has been said indeed that the golden rules of banking are reducible to three: first, to say 'No' when you ought to say it; second, never to change your mind when you have once said 'No'; third, never to throw good money after bad. Yet even among bankers there are as remarkable instances of reckless speculation as among their customers. A few great banks have fallen victims to the predominant influence of some daring speculator, who has persuaded the proprietors to stake the credit of their house on some visionary scheme. Many extraordinary advances in enterprise and social improvement have been made through the liberality of bankers; but in some instances they were before their time, and in others they were altogether unfortunate. We may mention one instance which has its place in railway history. Ravenscroft, the banker, advanced enormous sums on a scheme for running steam-carriages on ordinary turnpike-roads. A hundred thousand pounds was spent in developing this idea; but it all came to nothing. The experiments were made at midnight, to avoid observation; but they carried consternation and dismay into the neighbourhood. On one occasion an engine dashed through a hedge into a turnip-field, where it lay for several months, for no one claimed it during that time. The road engine attained a speed of eighteen miles an hour; but the

noise was voted a nuisance addition to their heavy losses. The promoters were subject to constant threats of prosecution for the scheme and the bank supported the scheme until it collapsed. In an old history of banking we met with a list of schemes that in their day deceived financial support. They were often of the most elegant and insensate kind. They seemed to exhaust the possibilities of human error in practice or rather impracticable, and these, however, after all, are the excrescences in the immense forest of sound business of that time, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers the honour of the earth, and that writes the pediment of the greatest Exchange in the world, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.'

The system of banking is one of enormous growth, which has implanted its fibres throughout the country; and if it were possible that it could be uprooted by a process which is simply unworkable—it would involve the ruin of the nation, or rather of the lives of nations. It was acutely felt by a French writer that if Napoleon I. had ruined England he would have ruined France well. If bank-notes and cash did not circulate we should require perhaps a hundred million more gold than there is in the country; and at the same time the convertibility of the bank-note is the very hinge on which the prosperity of the country revolves. It is customary for us to look upon our fiscal system as the very essence of exactitude and mechanical precision. So far from that, it is trembling alive to every breath that blows and reflects, as if in a mirror, every phase of the national wealth or distress. It is the barometer that ex-

registers the condition of the country. It is the edifice which, though it rears its towers so high, is built upon the airy delicate structure of public credit. It is the subtle expansive interest which extends to every counter and every home, and is concerned with every commercial transaction between men. It abounds

on every side with the deepest human interests, developing and expanding individual character, eliciting the greatest qualities of the human intellect and spirit, and exhibiting in its course as much of historical life and movement as the wearying chronicle of battles, sieges, and treaties that fills the pages of the historians.

F. A.

PHILIP.

A True Story.

WHAT is that building yonder?

The Opera-house just built,
With portico and staircase

New painted and new gilt.
A splendid frontage truly !

And yet I must confess,
That were it somewhat simpler
I should not like it less.

But no ! I would not change it—

Not in the least degree :
Such as the building now is,
Such I would have it be ;
Just as the workmen left it,
In all its gilded pride,
As a monument for ever
To *one* who nobly died !

What was his story ? Listen :

Look up, and you will see
The house, from roof to basement,
From scaffolding is free ;
No planks, no poles, no cordage,
No baskets rise and swing ;
The Opera-house is finished ;
They've hauled down everything.

'Tis just about a fortnight,
 On such a day as this,
 Three children round their father
 Clung for their morning kiss,
 Three curly-headed children—
 The youngest could not speak,
 So he placed it on his shoulder,
 And kissed it on each cheek.

'Now who is best and bravest
 Till father comes to-night,
 Shall go with him to-morrow
 To see a famous sight.
 The Opera-house is finished
 (Two years ago begun);
 And by this very evening
 Our labour will be done.

'And, mother, let our supper
 Be something of a treat;
 For *Philip* will be with us
 To make our feast complete.
He has no home—you know it—
 But Philip is my mate;
 So let his place be ready,
 His knife and fork and plate.'

The workman kissed his children,
 He kissed his young wife too,
 And went his way that morning
 A simple heart and true!
 And Philip joined him going—
 The man without a home—
 And they worked that day together
 Up there, beside the dome.

The master on the morrow
 Would give his men a treat,
 And the sound of merry voices
 Rang up and down the street,
 For the building you admire so
 (Two years ago begun),
 The pride of all the city—
 The Opera-house—was done.

The afternoon was waning—
 In another hour or so
 The work would be completed,
 And the workmen free to go;
 When, from the dome up yonder,
 There comes a cry for aid,
 And all below gaze upwards,
 And every hand is stayed,

And every mouth makes murmur,
And each one holds his breath;
For Philip and his comrade
Are face to face with *death* !
The plank on which they're standing
Is cracking at their feet,
And not a strand of anything
Between them and the street !

With *two* the plank must sever,
With *one* it yet might bear :
They knew the truth, these comrades,
As they faced each other there.
But the elder turned and shuddered,
He felt his courage sink ;
For the thought of wife and children
Will make a *brave* man shrink.

He gave one glance beneath him,
And from him burst a cry :
'I have a wife and children ;
O Philip, must I die !'
Then Philip looked an instant,
'Ay, lad,' said he, 'tis so !'
And he leaped from off the scaffold
Down to the street below !

There was black in place of colours,
A funeral for a feast ;
And the workmen mourned for Philip,
From the greatest to the least.
But 'tis all forgotten, maybe,
By this time ; for you know
We live so fast in these days,
And a fortnight's long ago !

Though *I* shall not forget it ;
But when I pass this street,
And hear the strangers praising
Our Opera-house complete,
Or when I'm told devotion
Is dying out of late,
I shall tell the tale of Philip,
Who died to save his mate !

HARRIET L. CHILDE-PEMBERTON.

THE HOME OF FAIRY TALES.

WHEN Odin left Asgard, and the country between the Euxine and the Caspian Sea, he marched with the flower of the Æsir through central Europe. Everywhere Fortune favoured his arms, and new kingdoms fell to be divided among his followers. At last Holstein was reached, and Jutland; thence passing over to Fünen he founded the city which still bears his name. From Odense, says Mallet, he extended his conquests over all the North. His son Skjöld he made King of Denmark, Yngui became King of Sweden, and Saeming King of Norway. Then Odin, when he felt his life was drawing to an end, called together his friends and comrades. With the point of a lance he nine times wounded himself, so that the wounds made a circle; then he cut his skin with his sword's point. He declared he was to sit at eternal banquet of the gods, and award to the brave who fell in battle the honours they had won; and thus he died. His body was borne to Sigtuna, his city in Sweden, and was burnt with pomp.

This connection with the legendary Odin gives Odense its first interest. It owes its second and modern interest to the birth of Hans Christian Andersen. His father, a shoemaker, was scarce twenty-two years of age, and while love abounded, money was scarce. 'The young man had himself put together his work-bench and his marriage-bed; the latter he had made out of the wooden frame which had borne the coffin

of the deceased Count Trane. The latter lay in state; the servants of the black cloth boards still kept this fact in remembrance. Instead of the corpse, surrounded by candeliers, there lay here, on the 2d of April 1805, a living child—that was myself, Christian Andersen. My mother is said to have sat, on that day, on the bed, and to have talked aloud in Holberg whilst I lay there. "Wilt thou sleep or not quietly?" he is reported to have said in jest; but I cried out in the church, when I was baptised, so that the preacher, who was a passionate man, said, "The youngster screams like a child, which words my mother could not forget. A poor emigrant, Comar, who stood godfather, comforted her in the mean time with this assurance, that the boy would scream as a child, the more pleasingly I should sing when he had become older.'

The little house stands close to the cathedral of St. Cnut, and may be easily found. On its projecting wall is the following inscription:

'Til dette Hus
Knytte sig
Digteren

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN
Kjaereste Barndomshjem

Odense Commune satte denne
Den 2den April 1875,
Dicterens 70—dabige fødselsdag

One room was the home of the cobbler, one room hung with pictures, with plate-racks, shelves of books and songs. On Sundays he made the th

which gave young Andersen his first dramatic aspirations; here the future poet listened with rapt attention to the *Thousand and One Nights*.

Once a year the family kept holiday. In May annually the mother donned her sacrament dress, and she and Hans and her husband went out into the woods to make holiday. Then at night the stove was decorated with the fresh beech-boughs; and with the bed-linen and window-curtains (the whiteness of which the mother of Andersen took so much delight in keeping snowy), the little room was gay as little room could be. Hans' father's mother came daily to see her grandson. She was of good descent. Her grandmother had been a noble lady in Cassel, the capital of Hesse, who married a player, and ran from home. She lived in great poverty; but her daily duty was to tend a garden at the hospital in Odense; and when, twice a year, she burned the waste of the garden, her little Hans was always there, to play with the heap of leaves and peapods, when he was a little lad; and when he was older, to astonish the old women, who brought their spinning-wheels beside the garden blaze, with his childish eloquence and his precocious study of physiology. In return for information as to their heart and lungs the old dames rewarded the boy with stories—stories of the north-bred, which revealed a world as rich, he says, as that of the *Arabian Nights*.

At the time of Andersen's childhood no steamboat existed, and communication with one's friends by post was rare. Odense might have lured a stray traveller to the belief that he had, indeed, stepped back some hundred years, 'so many customs prevailed then which belonged to an earlier age.'

'The corporations went about in procession, and had before them their harlequin with mace and bells. On Shrove Tuesday the butchers drove through the streets the fattest ox adorned with flowers; a boy in a white shirt and with large wings rode on the same. The sailors went through the city with music and all their flags flying; and at last the two most daring among them wrestled on a plank between two boats, of whom the one who did not fall into the water was the victor. But what imprinted itself particularly on my memory, and became constantly refreshed therein by subsequently repeated narratives, was the stay of the Spaniards in Fyers in 1808. True it is I was at that time but three years old; still I perfectly well remember the brown foreign men who excited riots in the streets, and the cannon which were discharged. I saw the people sleep on straw in a half tumble-down church near the asylum. A Spanish soldier took me one day in his arms, and pressed a silver image which he wore upon his breast to my lips. I remember that my mother was angry at this, for it was something Popish, she said; but the image and the strange man who danced with me, kissed me, and wept, pleased me; certainly he himself had children at home in Spain. I saw one of his comrades led off to execution; he had killed a Frenchman. Many years later, influenced by this circumstance, I wrote my little poem, "The Soldier," which Chamisso translated into German, and which afterwards was included in the illustrated people's book of "Soldiers' Songs."

Napoleon became the shoemaker's hero; one morning he left Odense as a soldier, and marched into Holstein. There

his martial hopes were extinguished; peace was declared, and he returned to his cobbler's bench, his Holberg, and his gifted child, to whom he taught, half in jest, words of the odd dialects he had heard on this expedition.

'Thou hast, indeed, advantage from my travels,' he said. 'God knows whether thou wilt get so far; of that, however, thou must take care; think thou of that, Hans Christian!'

The campaign, simple as it had been, was too much for the gentle father. The ice-maiden came for him, as he had said she would, when he showed her outstretched arms on the morning frosted pane. The entire night a cricket chirped.

Hans' mother married again; and when he was fourteen years of age he determined to go to Copenhagen, to 'become celebrated.' After much entreaty he was allowed to go, chiefly on the assurance of a wise woman specially called in, who prophesied by cards and coffee, 'Your son will become a great man; and in honour of him Odense will become one day illuminated.' Mother and grandmother went with him to the city gate, and parted with grief too great for tears. The aged gardener of the hospital he never saw again.

It was some years before Andersen returned; and his account of his feelings is simple and affecting.

'I crossed the Belt,' he says, 'and travelled on foot to Odense; as I came nearer, and saw the high old church-tower, I became considerably more and more affected. I felt deeply the care which God had taken of me, and burst into tears. My mother was rejoiced over me. The families of Iversen and Guldberg received me kindly; in the little streets I saw the people open their windows

to look after me; then a that matters had gone on ably well with me. Na one of the principal citize had built a high tower house, took me up there looked out over the city country around, and son women from the hospital who knew me from my ch pointed up to me—then stood, as it were, on the v nacle of fortune.'

I have quoted freely Hans Christian Andersen *of his Life*, because then his style of narration bined simplicity and s sciousness of achievement are thoroughly character his whole life.

Odense is even now a city, full though it is of business. It is entirely We seldom found Germans and the traps for travel struggling with the Danes shops are numerous indeed

The church of St. Cnut, left-hand side of which sen's father was buried, dat about the thirteenth c but an earlier edifice on foundation to the saint l It was fourteen years afliam of Normandy had cor England, that Cnut ascen Danish throne; but he eagan to make preparations struggle with the new r England for the crown his uncle had borne. William's are said to have been too l allow the project a fair c It was severely dealt wit culminated in Cnut's assassi before the altar of St. Alba 1086. In 1100 he was can and his shrine is to this d holiest object in his own c Through the glass can be se skull and bones of the ma but for private disloyalty,

have been the father of our kings of Britain.

The guide with whom we began our visit to the church spoke a little German, and was fairly intelligible. With the intention, however, of making things easier, she left us, to send a niece who could speak English. She came; but, alas, how that niece had misled her friends my pen grieves to write! Her English was quite as embarrassing to us as it was to her, which is saying not a little. She did her work well. We missed nothing in this cathedral of green and pink pillars: the altar of 1649; the quaint picture of Margaret of Skofgaard in her black brocade, and ring on thumb; the picture of Cnut's murder;

the font of Christian IV.; the effigies of John II. and his wife; the monument of Hamo Ahlefeldt; the portrait of Luther and his wife in the minister's room, and the archives from 1542: all these our fair guide showed us; but the running comment was only a little understood by us. Politeness forbade that we should ask her to try a more familiar tongue, and curiosity sharpened our ears.

Near the cathedral stands a fine statue of Frederick VII., by Thorwaldsen's pupil Bissen. The constitution of 1848 is clasped in his hand; and the sturdy thick-set figure is a significant object and historical monument to the people of Odense. W. G. B.

DAN'L.

A Story of Lamb-yard.

THE only son of his mother, and she is a widow. Not, however, a widow of a pronounced type, refusing to be comforted by earthly consolations. Dan'l, being a small philosopher, congratulates himself on his exceptional luck, by no means regarding his fate which has limited his connections of blood as an adverse one. It is something, surely, to be untrammelled by the oppressions of two parents, and free from the fretting cares of juvenile brothers and sisters. In the yard where he lives he is accustomed to look down from the altitude of a fourth-story window on an arena of incessant battle, not to say occasional murder and sudden death. To him it appears that affinities and consanguinities are the justifications for brutal ill-usage. Therefore his precocious sapience has decided that many relatives are to be deprecated as bearing, as they do, such painful consequences of supplemental blows and curses. Irresponsible, unfettered action is Dan's highest conception of bliss; to be let alone, all his ignorant little mind craves. The bloated virago who is Dan's maternal parent he sometimes thinks, smarting from the application of her hands, might be dispensed with; if, indeed, the administration of undivided happiness were a matter of moment. Her occasional presence in the attic does not add to the amenities of his situation. Moreover, Dan would like to live out of the unwholesome court where destiny has reared him. His deep brown eyes are sometimes wistful with a longing for something beyond he has never seen. Where do the flowers grow? The sun must certainly have gathered its golden beauty beyond soot-chimneys and reeking yards; the little clouds could never look so white if they had collected moisture only from the filthy gutter and blackened house-tops. Dan had no little meteorological skill from much frequenting of the roof. From the aspect of the heavens he learnt all the spiritual lore he knew. After all, the clouds did drop fatness of a certain kind upon his thirsty soul. But Dan's yearnings and aspirations for he knows not what, for green fields and flowers and singing birds, and the sights and sounds bound up inextricably with happy child-life, are likely to be gratified. Mrs. Potter has duties and pleasures which chain her to Lamb-yard. She is a lady in great repute in the vicinity, her actual calling being of an indefinite nature, and her spirit one of a convivial calibre. She is a devout

shipper of beer, and a staunch supporter of the saving efficacy of spirituous compounds. Being domestically unattached, these qualities of sociability are decided recommendations in her favour in moments of difficulty or family bereavement.

'Now, do'ee take a drop o' comfort,' is the specific enjoiner of this lady under all critical circumstances. By turns she goes out washing, acts as nurse, or lays out the dead. When times are very bad, and incidental employments fail, she finds work as a rag-sorter. Dan'l's larder is supplied by the broken bread and



See p. 51.

meat she brings home; any cash she may have earned immediately finds its way to the gin-palace. It can scarcely be said that the commissariat department is daintily provendered; and the little boy's skinny limbs testify to no wholesome faring. Dan's wardrobe is likewise replenished, after an irregular fashion, by articles of clothing bestowed or purloined. Mrs. Potter makes no nice distinctions between giving and taking. Her moral vision is afflicted with chronic strabismus, which causes her to perceive obliquely the lines between mine and thine. However, Dan has no clairvoyant knowledge of stolen property, and joyfully

puts on any juvenile Tom, Dick, or Harry's garment which hides his nakedness or keeps him warm. They are never anything but tattered rags at the best, but every additional layer carries with it a capability of comfort. Under different circumstances this little hero would have been the pretty curled darling of nursery and drawing-room. Fond nurses and vain mothers would have extolled his personal charms, while they lavished money and cares upon him. The tangled mass of dull yellow hair, washed and combed, would have made a saint-like aureole above the eyes; while a point-lace collar and velvet tunic framing the pale head would have caused his beauty to be remarked.

Now only a dirt-grimed face, with a lion-like mane of tow, looks out of a collection of rags with a patient, submissive gaze on the ills of which life seems to be so full; the precocious cunning of the London street-child is absent from this. Naturally, where tricky craftiness is a chief merit, Dan'l's cap is underrated. In Lamb-yard he is contemptuously regarded as of feeble intellect. Moreover, the little boy is lame. Incapability of limb is a decided disadvantage here, where leaping powers are frequently a necessity. Some one had let Dan fall when he was a baby. No one knows how it happened, for no one cares for his infirmity. One hip is now bowed out, and the leg beneath it is considerably shorter than the companion one. The child is sensitive on this point, and because of a shrinking dread of ridicule he makes no companions amongst other children. Dan is used to blows, no longer cowering beneath them; he shudders and his heart flutters with wild throbs at every jest or gibe cast at his lameness. It is something he cannot hide, something which marks him out as inferior to others. His sad eyes open without fear to days of starvation, but they do not meet without flinching the scorn of contemptuous grins bestowed upon his halting gait. Because of this, Dan hates to go out into the streets. The scant blood mounts to his wan cheeks at any time he is compelled to face the motley crew which hangs about the entrance to the house. The shrill-voiced children who congregated in the yard seem to detect his weakness, shouting after him like a pack of yelping curs, 'Hop and go, you dog!' Tears are not ready to come to eyes that have always known privation and cruelty; but, well out of the reach of his tormentors, Dan sometimes pauses to hurl back violent imprecations of abuse. For you must understand that oaths and vile language are the mother-tongue of children in Lamb-yard. Yet Dan is altogether without companions. There are homeless cats prowling on the house-tops who hail him as their friend. He can climb out of the little back window of his garret on to the roof and reign a king in the realm of chimney-pots. This is

Dan takes his daily walks abroad as soon as Mrs. Potter has departed on her predatory campaign. The sparrows are quite unconcerned at his halting approach, and gossip in his presence on the scarcity of bread-crumbs in this district, or cast discrediting reflections on the pugnacious conduct of their neighbours without fear—that is to say, if his feline friends are not in view. Amongst the many cats who have their happy hunting-grounds here, there is one which Dan holds specially dear. For this scarred tabby, whose mangy fur looks like a worn-out garment, Dan'l saves bits and scraps from his meagre meals, reckoning such self-denial amongst his pleasures. The beloved tabby goes on three legs, her fourth having apparently been broken off in a trap. As Dan caresses her daily, he looks sadly at this injured limb; he compares her anatomy with his own, feeling her ribs, and dismayed to find them equally perceptible to his touch. He is quite sure that the other cats mew, 'Hop and go three,' as she appears, gaunt and large-eyed, above the chimney-pots, for she never dares to draw near to him in their presence.

How happy Dan is, up high on these blackened tiles! Here he is absolute sovereign, with none to dispute his unknown title. He has his throne against a stack of insecure chimneys. He can see the sky from this point; it is blue sometimes, even through this murky atmosphere, and in his sheltered nook the sun blesses him with its brightness and gracious warmth. Small things these to some of us; unnoticed things by those who are rich in this world's goods, and who fare sumptuously on Nature's and Art's sights every day. Little Dan's canopy is so fine that he is never tired of admiring this covering to his throne. Now high, now low, it changes its texture with the months, and its colour with every hour of the day and night. He loves to lie upon his back against the slanting roof, shading his eyes with two sooty hands, and to look up into the deep vault which is so full of mystery to him. Occasionally, when Mrs. Potter comes home in the small hours, wild-eyed and staggering, waking Dan out of his slumbers as she falls heavily upon her pallet bed, he steals out to his watch-tower and sees visions glorious. Once in the summer he saw the sun rise over the sleeping city. The recollection of bright starlight nights, of the moon with surrounding silvery clouds, of the golden stars, and the softly-blowing winds in the cool dawn, make up the poetry of Dan's life. They are all the beauty he knows; but it is much that he knows that they are beautiful. Day by day the feeling of the sublime in these things waxes stronger in the child's heart. Far above the close courts, almost beyond the sounds of tipsy revelry and loud-pitched voices, the little spirit flutters with awe and reverence towards something purer than the humanity it knows is able to bring it.

The winter is, however, a sad time for Dan. Aloft in miserable garret, he suffers from cold and often almost fraughts of icy temperature, with frost and damp, wage against him, unopposed by any counteracting influence of fuel is scarce in these regions, and there is never anything cooked. When the snow lies deep on the house-top icicles hang about the waterspouts, the days are long and less to patient little Dan. It is mid-winter now. To there are actually a few embers in the grate, over which the sits cowering. The moon is shining on the snow outside Dan, weak and heart-sick, does not look out of his window the fairy-like scene. He knows his three-footed cat is outside, and he cannot bear to look on her misery. He catches her mewling piteously, and he feels sure that during this process frost her ribs are startlingly perceptible. Slow tears are down his face. He is hungry and cold, for he has been without food. The cat's misery is the last straw which his endurance.

'Little Dan Tucker, come sing for your supper,' pipes voice through the keyhole.

The child starts to his feet, tossing the tangled man from his face, while a smile breaks over it—a smile which pathetic in its unusual gladness.

'O Bess, so you've com'd back? How did yer get? Aren't got no supper?' he half sobs, as he unlatches the door to a dishevelled girl, who wears tawdry finery, and hidden eyes.

'Crying, little Dan? Now none o' that. Bess don't liars devils. Come down and have a bite o' summat hot and Mother Potter, she's snug at Fitch's for the night. 'em 'ollering over their liquor as I com'd from the pork-butcher's.

The girl with the defiant coarse face, a girl of whom Dan would have spoken no good, takes the child gently by the hand and leads him to the floor beneath—leads him carefully, for he is so lame, and he is always timid of descending those boards. Yet Dan goes joyfully. There is always a roaring fire in Bess's room, and a ragged curtain across the window out draughts. Bread and cheese are set out *to-night* upon a bare table, and a savoury odour proceeds from the frying the hob. A man lies upon the bed with his face down, hidden on his arm. Dan casts a timid glance in his direction as he hobbles towards the welcoming blaze.

'Don't you mind him, Dan'l. He'll not wake up this daylight. Dead drunk, of course. Now then, you look at the begin on that bread-and-cheese. I guess you'll have no sausage or two a-top o' it.'

As she took up the frying-pan, Dan's glistening eyes, with tears yet upon their thick lashes, answered her facetious remark. Bess drew a long breath, which, I think, had near kinship to a sigh, as she watched him ravenously gnawing his crust.

'You shall have a bit of summat for pussy to-night, Dan'l. 'Taren't a night to starve a cat, and it are Chris'mas to-morrow, too.'

Another bright flash from Dan's eyes.

'O Bess, you are a real good 'un! What's Chris'mas?'

She turned the sausages in the pan with a vigorous shake, frowning dubiously over them. Dan was wont to puzzle her with his whats and whys.

'I ain't ever exackly heerd the meanin' on it. I knows as it's a time as we eats and drinks more nor usual, if we can git it. I believe as they tells you summat about it in the churches. There was wonst a preacher chap as com'd to the Yard as 'ud spout for hours out on a book they calls a Bible; but 'twarn't no good for us. We all on us got tired of his 'ollerin' and prayin', and Jerry Bloggs he give him the sack wi' a black eye. He used to talk o' Chris'mas. I ain't got much notion of it myself. Bill there, that brute, he come home drunk because it were Chris'mas, and I were a-sittin' alone by the fire, wi' sausages for two, and I heerd that cat o' yourn a-squealing, and I know'd as you was alone up there.'

With his mouth stuffed full of hot sausage, Dan remarks,

'I wish as 'ow it 'ud be Chris'mas every night, for a supper o' this sort. I say, Bess, yer've been gone a long time. I've tried the door every day.'

So he has missed her. She is beyond shame before her fellows; but she does not meet the little boy's gaze now.

'Yes; nigh on a fortnight,' she answers shortly, heaping on to his plate two more sausages, with a faint hope of checking his conversation and inquiries.

'Yer've got a chap wi' ye, I sees. Are he a kind 'un?' recommences Dan, after an interval of silent feasting, during which he surveys the huge form lying like a log in the corner. Bess was uneasy during that scrutiny, for Dan would surely find her out.

She gives voice to a harsh laugh; but again her eyes evade the wondering stare turned upon her.

'Kind? Bless ye, child, if they keeps us in victuals they'se a right to kick us. They all on 'em kicks us women; that's what we'se made for. I ain't one to mind boots, as long as they doesn't take to knives and pokers. I'll allus stand leather, which is fair; but no steel for me.'

When Dan has finished his supper Bess cuts off the rind of

the cheese, and wrapping it with half a sausage in a bit she places it in his hands.

'There's your pussy's supper, Dan'l. Now you sticks home careful, wi'out tumblin' down them stairs. Bloggs he did ought to be ashamed on, and don't you s haven't had no Chris'mas fare.'

The attenuated familiar still moans pitifully outside the window on Dan's return; but she does not go uncorrected. The little boy, opening the window cautiously to her entry, pushes out his paper parcel on to the snow and joyfully watches the cat retire with the festive meal to the shadow of the chimney where she usually shelters.

In the morning Dan wakes to a fireless, fasting solitude. Mrs. Potter has not returned on the previous night, and the room looks very desolate in the cold gray light. That rouses Dan is the loud cursing of a quarrelling pair where below in the yard. There are no herald angels to bring good tidings of any great joy into these loathsome and squalid attics. Imprecations loud and frequent are heard on all sides. Truth and mercy do not meet together here; goodness has never kissed this scum of the earth. The deities from on high cannot visit them, for no prophet has gone to their holiness. They that sit in darkness here have not so much as heard of light. Men and brethren, like priests and Levites on the other side, from touching so much uncleanness.

This morning there is no breakfast for Dan; but he accepts the situation, speculating as to whether his relative will be home before the midday meal-time. He tries to be thankful for in being so well fortified against the attack of hunger by last night's supper.

'That were a rare good blow-out,' soliloquises Dan, placently recalling the taste of the savoury viands.

This little boy is so accustomed to variable feasts and fasts, that his stomach has developed a camel-like power of expansion and collapse, no longer producing inconvenient sensations. In Dan's nature can scarcely, in fairness, be said to abhor emptiness being the chronic condition of the inner man, he has ceased to take note of symptoms. He makes no attempt to leave his nest of sacking and old garments, which retain the odour communicated by his body. There is nothing to get up this morning being gloomy and snow still covering up the house. Dan remembers that it is Christmas-day, and reflects that on what Bess has told him of the festival. Not much, certainly, but, joined on to his own hazy recollections of past seasons, he manages to make a cheerful piece of patchwork out of

had seen shops full of gay stuffs and brightly-coloured cards, and the eating-house windows all displayed mighty joints of juicy red meat, supported by colossal plum-puddings. No one could cut him out of his part and lot in the feast of sight and smell. How pretty the shining evergreens had looked piled up on the costermongers' carts! How he wished some one would give him a bit of bright holly! Perhaps Bess might. Dan recalled the hurry and bustle of the streets, the number of rich people carrying parcels, and their lavish bestowal of coppers on crossing-sweepers. Why was it all? Bess had said something about the churches. It might be worth while trying what they could tell him. Suppose they turned him out or refused him admittance. By the time Dan has arrived at this point in his reflections, he can hear bells ringing in the distance. He gets up slowly and looks out of the front-window. The men are not at work to-day, and loiter about with pipes, while the women are very unwontedly busy over culinary occupations. They all seemed to be making an attempt at festivity. The bells went on ringing more impressively; some loud and deep from afar; some tinkling feeble little invitations near at hand, as though worn out in the attempt to persuade any in this locality to kneel and pray. Dan reaches for a bit of comb on a shelf, and passes it once or twice through the tangle of his hair. The process is a painful one; but Dan valiantly determines to look respectable. He next plunges a tattered rag through the ice on the surface of a pail of water, vigorously applying the damp cloth to his face, and making every chilblain on his fingers tingle with the cold application. Then an extra garment is rummaged out of the heap which formed the bedclothes, and slung round his lank body. Mercifully for Dan's case, the police are not insistent on the concealment of extremities; for he has neither socks nor boots, and no remnant of a cap to put on his head. At the foot of the staircase two or three low-browed ruffians stand barring the entrance of the little light and air there is to be had here. Brawny-armed matrons fulfil maternal offices, seated on the lowest steps, and relieve the monotony of duty by incidental sparring matches of their tongues. Dan, having crept down three flights unmolested, pauses in dismay above the last.

'Hallo, young un! I sees yer skulking up there; them big eyes o' yourn lets in too much daylight. 'Taren't often now that we catches sight o' them bandy legs. You're a deal better nor a acrobat at 'Ampstead to look at.'

A deep flush rises to the pale face; Dan's eyelids quiver; but he sets his mouth tightly. Slowly he descends the steep steps, which creak beneath his light weight, even while he holds fast by the damp-stained wall. The brutal voice gave one of those loud laughs of derision which have so little of real mirth in them.

'Well done for you, Dan'l. You looks like a crab wi' its toes tastin' hot water. Yer nimble enough wi' them cranky feet, though them fingers o' yourn don't seem equil to nowt.'

Dan hobbles nearer, in the vain hope of making his exit. The man stands in the doorway barring him in.

'Where's Mother Potter?'

With eyes full of a supplication he is not aware of, Dan looks at his ruffianly interrogator.

'Her went yesterday to Fitch's berryin'.'

One heavy hand is laid on Dan's shoulder, and the other turns his thin face sharply upward.

'A nice one you is to comfort a widder. I'd leather you if you was mine into summat spryer nor lookin' out o' a up-stair winder. Why, that there game leg is good money wasted; it 'ud be a fortin to them as know'd how to make use on it.'

Dan shudders perceptibly as the man makes a pass with his foot at the deformed limb.

'I knows yer not that feeble yer looks. I've watched ye many a time crawlin' like a fly on the housetop, over places as 'ud make most on us dizzy. Yer'd be a rare good un to let down a chimley. Yah, get along wi' ye, yer've not the spirit of a fly.'

With a sounding cuff ringing in his ears the little cripple creeps through the opening made by the man's legs, and quickly disappears round the corner. When Dan gets home early in the afternoon he finds Mrs. Potter ensconced on the three-legged stool in the chimney-corner. Having assisted at a neighbour's funeral-feast on the previous day, she has scarcely recovered from the overwhelming effects of woe. Mourning and lamentation demand strong supports of stimulants, and the lachrymose maudlin results take some hours to wear off.

'Well, Dan'l, wherivver have ye been? It are a rum start to see ye a-settin' off for hours. Yer old mother ain't been able, arter all, to bring ye a Chris'mas dinner, though there's a bit o' cold suet-dumpling, and a jar of pickles as I've brought home, in the cupboard—pickles do always come in handy, and Mrs. Fitch she do leave things lyin' about so careless. I'm rare fond of them pickled onions of a mornin', when my mouth's dry.'

Dan had suffered no experience of a dry mouth; but some of the prized delicacy agreeably supplemented the unsavoury pudding, and helped to fill the void. Perceiving his parent to be in an unusually placable mood, he makes inquiry concerning the late festivity.

'It were the beautifullest laid-out body as ivver I set eyes on, and such a berryin' as never was. Mrs. Fitch she did the thing hansom. That poor Fitch might hev turned in his coffin

to the smell o' them sperrits, they was that 'ot and strong. She aren't one to show no disrespect to them as kep 'er well provided i' life. Costermongers is a werry good trade if you knows 'ow to buy cheap and sell dear, and if you've a cart and donkey as the perlice can't cotch 'old on for cru'lty to hanimals. An' there's Tommy Fitch, no bigger nor you, Dan'l, wi' a sharp eye to the biz'ness a'ready. To be sure, the rubbidge that lad do sell! Mrs. Fitch she ain't lef a lone widdier like me, wi' a lad as can't keep hisself in bread and butter.' Here Mrs. Potter makes prepara-



tions for tears. Dan'l, perceiving the direction of her remarks to be becoming personal, makes a brilliant diversion.

'I've been to church and chapel this mornin'.'

The contortions of Mrs. Potter's features are arrested. She stares aghast at her offspring, who is such a singular contraversion of any youthful species with which she is acquainted.

'Warn't one on 'em enough?'

Dan'l is playing marbles with a couple of pickles on the table.

'Might hev been if they'd ha' let me in where I could see all as was goin' on.'

Mrs. Potter's interest is languid.

'What did ye heer?'

Dan'l is looking out of the window across the snowy rooftops now. The marbles have ceased to interest him. His forehead is puckered with many lines.

'I couldn't make nought on it all. There was crowds o' rich folks a-singin' and a-talkin' on their knees into their hands and hats at times. It were warm there, and there were carpets and cushions; but they didn't tell ought as I wanted to know about Chris'mas. A big greasy chap in the chapel he blowed hisself out in a cock-a-hoop way, and talked very loud about salvation. The people they all shouted arter him a kinder song about a new king; they seemed all mighty glad and cheerful like because on it. They was happier than them in the church. *They* didn't seem so com'fable and friendly like there. The music it were all runnin' up and down, and squeakin', and cryin', and interrupting a gentleman wi' kid gloves. It didn't give him no time to speak whatever, though he were gettin' up and down continual, like a Jack-in-the-box, and walkin' about from one book to t'other, as though he warn't settled in his mind which the people 'ud like best. There were cartloads o' holly, and words writ i' large red letters, and a table as was all covered wi' flowers. The gentleman he got behind a iron railin', and the people they all popped down on their knees, and he poured summat into a jug, and covered it all over wi' a tablecloth. He had a gran' sort o' long cloak on all covered wi' gold and yeller ribbons. My! he did think hisself fine, he walked so slow and solemn like. When he got up into a bigger box he didn't seem to have much to say, and they all on 'em seemed werry glad when it was over. 'Twere summat about salvation again—salvation to the Gentiles this time. He spoke like as if it were all right enough for them there, as if *they* didn't have any need to fear. But there didn't seem no Gentiles in church; they all on 'em looked quite com'fable, as if they'd got it sure enuf.'

When Dan pauses in his relation, Mrs. Potter murmurs in an abstracted way,

'I were married i' a church. Potter he paid five shillin's for that bizness; but, bless yer, it were good money wasted. I ain't ever been 'side a church sinst, and a'most forgets what it all sinnifies.'

After a prolonged shaking of her head, with thoughts regretfully cast to the irrecoverable five shillings, Mrs. Potter concludes,

'I guess it aren't all much good for us. If you wants to be decent the register's a cheaper ticket.'

Dan'l has not paid any heed to the parental interruption.

His form has not relaxed, and his eyes are still intently gazing at the landscape of sky and chimney.

'Is it poor folks as is Gentiles, I wonner? Shall we burn i' fire and brimstone if we don't get hold on this salvation?'

Mrs. Potter sniffs the air contemptuously, as if the odoriferous qualities of hell's furnace were present.

'I ain't much fear of fire and brimstone. Brimstone—that are match-boxes; and, bless yer, we're glad enough to see fire. That ain't my notion of 'ell.'

Dan is leaning against the window-sill, and makes no answer now. His feeble effort after some illumination is put out. No helping breath blows the little spark of inquiry nearer to the touchwood of truth. Christmas comes and goes to him an undiscoverable mystery.

Once more it is night. Mrs. Potter having wearied of the monotony of her garret, and thirsting for friendly intercourse with bottles and jugs, has taken her departure. It would appear that the unerring keenness of her olfactory nerve has scented convivial gatherings somewhere below in the Yard. Dan is alone again with the fire gone out, and the moon shedding its cold comfort on his desolation through the panes in the back window, which are not stuffed with rags and newspapers. The memory of suet-pudding and pickled onions has become faint. Dan strokes the depression in the gastric region with soothing remonstrance addressed to its emptiness. His little brain is weaving busily speculative thoughts. The Church has been a grievous disappointment, and Christmas altogether so unsatisfactory. There is no one near to tell him what so many things mean. Hunger and pain and cold are hard at work about him; blows, drunken assaults, police-courts, are the daily incidents in lives near him. Yet across such miseries short-lived gleams of happiness break, pointing out that life has other possibilities. He has heard of hospitals and ragged schools. Individually he has experienced Bess's goodness. Cats are grateful, and the sun is often warm, while the blue sky takes him into another world of joy. He opens the little window at last, and looks up at the stars shining clearly in the frosty night air. O little Dan, little Dan, still feeling after something eternal and divine!

By and by he gets out of the window, and clambers along the roof which shelters so many vagabond heads, so many sinful hearts. His bare feet make tracts upon the snow. The gaunt form of his cat suddenly starts up from beneath the chimneys. He lifts this animal up, pressing it close to his rags in endeavour to warm the shivering beast. But she struggles to be free, still inviting his notice when set down by rubbing herself against his

legs. A faint sound beneath the shadow of his throne lures Dan'l onwards. O strange event! O exquisite joy and wonder to him to see two tiny kittens nestling beneath that shelter! He kneels down on the snow, leaning over them and caressing them with exultant delight, while his soft brown eyes are dewy with his deep satisfaction. The proud mother, having gained his suffrage, purrs against him, claiming his admiration for her performance. The Christmas joy which is so universal, but which Dan thinks he is to have no share in, has visited him at last. Something his very own, something living, which he can love, has been given to him. Rich and happy children, with dogs and ponies, books and playthings, might wonder and marvel at the exquisite felicity with which this cripple's heart was full. But so it was. Small things can make up the joy of little creatures who live forlorn and neglected. Dan fully shared the mother's fond pride as, by the light of the moon, he examined her offspring's beauties. He quite forgets how long he is outside. Making a nest on his knees he nurses the cat and kittens for nearly an hour. At last his benumbed fingers can scarcely feel the pretty skins. The trains pass over the viaduct, which is not far off, and from time to time the smoke from the engines makes clouds which obscure the gas-lamps from view. But Dan's eyes are not fixed on the transitory little lights below him. Echoes from the spheres are making music for him as his looks are raised to the myriads of golden lamps which hang out of the deep empyrean, and he takes no note of the sounds in the street. At last a distant clock sounds an alarm in his ears. He knows it is time to go. With deep distress, with a gathering frown above his eyes, he meditates how to dispose the family which has resigned itself to his charge. He carries it to the most sheltered corner of the roof. The mother makes a plaintive remonstrance as he puts the kittens down. Quite desperate, Dan at last takes off his tattered coat, and arranges a warm nest out of its folds, covering the feline progeny over with the sleeves of this garment. At the window of his home he peers in cautiously. Mrs. Potter and a boon companion are seated at the table. The illumination of a tallow dip, set in a bottle, reveals the red significance of the opposite faces. Alas, that Dan should be so critically observant of such tokens! Two pewters are before the women, and they have a dirty pack of cards. Dan shivers in his coatless condition; shivers, too, in an anticipatory dread of what will probably befall him. The two viragos quarrel perpetually over their game. At length, in an access of disappointed rage, Mrs. Potter flings the cards on the floor. Then this heavy limbed amazon, clad in the man's pilot-jacket, which is her chief winter garment, appears to recall a forgotten duty. She advances to the window with an unsteady gait, though an angry resolve is

evident in her flaming eyes. Dan shrinks away into an angle of the roof when she draws near. As she opens the window and protrudes her head, he can feel her hot breath wafted towards him.

'Curse that brat, them's his footsteps, I knows; and me a widder, wi' no one to send to the public, and not in a state of 'ealth after a berryin' to tramp backards and forrards down four flights o' stairs! Dan'l! Dan'l! I'll give ye a taste o' shoe-leather if yer don't look sharp back; I'll larrup ye as dead as mutton if ye stays up there any longer!'

The shrill fierceness of her voice seems to cut the frosty air, but Dan is not moved by it. He only shuts his eyes tightly for fear their gleam may betray him in that dark corner, remembering how well he can see his cat's eyes shining in the obscurity. The surrounding moonlight makes the shadow deep enough to conceal him where he lurks. Mrs. Potter retires with rumbling anathemas. Dan knows she cannot get at him here, and by and by she will fall asleep, and he can creep in unobserved. The evil time for him of triumphant shoe-leather will thus be deferred.

Mrs. Potter sleeps. Not the sleep of the just, for she turns and snores on her pallet-bed tormented with feverish dreams.

Dan, too, has found rest: his is more like the companionship of Death's twin brother. There is peace upon his face, and a smile playing about his white lips. He dreams he is in a church once more, a larger and different church from the one of the morning, one which he thinks cannot have been made with hands, for it is like the sky, and he can see no end to it. One thin hand is beneath his cheek, and his brow is not puckered by any oppressive care. The pathos of his brown eyes is concealed by the curling lashes which rest upon his cheek.

There is an odd smell in the room, considering no fire burns in the grate. Mingling with the moonlight a sort of reflected glow seems to be thrown up from below. By degrees the atmosphere becomes dense with the little whiffs of smoke which travel down the chimney. Every successive minute they come in heavier volumes. Mrs. Potter stirs and coughs occasionally. Dan, too, at last feels an oppression in his breathing. After several gasping efforts to relieve himself from some malignant influence, he wakes. The moon is still shining, but between him and the window there is a strange mist hanging—nay, moving. Clouds like those from the railway engine roll down the chimney, while a strong odour of burning is perceptible. Dan has often witnessed fires, and he remembers the smell of scorched plaster and smoking woodwork. A sickly fetid rottenness is exhaled from dwellings such as these beneath the breath of flames. He is quickly roused and conscious of danger.

'Mother, mother, wake up sharp, else we'll be burnt ! The house is afire !'

A crackling noise is audible, and a loud sighing sound, like the sob of a furnace, follows his words. The enemy is quickly gaining ground where there is so little that is substantial to fill its greedy maw.

The woman opens her eyes, gasps once or twice, and turns round on the other side, making a sleepy lunge with a loosely-closed fist at the face bent above her.

'Get along, you limb of Satan ! I'll leather ye black and blue in the morning. I'll make you bleed. I'll shut them big eyes o' yours as sure as your name's Dan'l Potter !'

Louder than before comes that ominous roar, faster than ever the smoke pours down the chimney. With yet more desperate energy Dan shakes his drowsy mother. A red light is visible beneath the door, and the dull sound, like a tempest approaching, is full of warning. Half choked by gusts of smoke, Dan drags himself to the front window. He flings it open, stretching his head out into the court. The draught draws the smoke. He is forced to lean out to get his breath. Flames shine through the windows of the floor beneath, at last shivering the glass with a loud crash, and bursting triumphantly through the framework. Tongues of fire issue from Bess's room. Mrs. Potter has now shaken off her torpor of intoxication, and, with wildly staring eyes, she rushes to the open window, shrieking like a maniac. Dan, hobbling to the door, bursts it open, seeking their last chance of escape. He only admits a dense volume of smoke, and sees beyond it cruel leaping flames writhing about the wooden balustrade, licking up all before them. That avenue is hopelessly cut off. With all his puny strength he shuts the door securely, and drags the rickety table from the centre of the room to fix against it. Dan has a notion of barring the entrance of those fiery fiends who advance so joyously. Mrs. Potter, screaming violently like one distraught, holds fast to the window-sill, looking down with terrified eyes into the court beneath, where a crowd is gathered.

'Like rats cotched in a trap !' she mutters hoarsely, after a gush of wild blasphemy. Her bloodshot eyes turn to Dan in despairing fear. The child's timid look has gone ; his eyes are full of heroic light. An awestruck, solemn gaze, without any fear, meets the woman's.

'Mother, don't you be afeard ; the engine-house ain't far off.'

She leans against the little frail figure ; she clutches him about the neck, imprecating violently, while shudders of abject terror shake her whole body. It was terrible to see. Dan is used to terrible sights, but the strain of such a delirious fear is almost

too much for him to bear. He does not shrink from the clasp, but a sort of numbness seems to creep over him while the impious torrent of curses pours forth. How long will it last, Dan wonders?

'There ain't no engine nigher nor Whitechapel-road. We shall die, Dan'l. It's fire and brimstone com'd a'ready, and ne'er a drop i' the room to drink. It's worser nor fryin' in 'ell.'

She is incoherent in her desperation. Dan, fiercely locked in her strong arms, feeling the boards getting hot beneath his feet, thinks that the end is at hand. Not yet, Dan, not yet. There remains something for you to do—something which will give you a place in the choir of unknown child-angels who have ministered at the altar of heroic sacrifice. The fire had already firm hold of the upper stories of the building while Dan peacefully slumbered. The firemen had been on their way to the scene of disaster when he woke up to consciousness of danger. The roar is becoming louder. Dan cannot hear his mother's words, although she shouts. He is glad that the sound of those unholy curses is shut out from him. Now they feel the hot flames lick the woodwork of the door. The lurid light sheds reflections far beyond the yard on distant buildings. Succour is approaching. The engine is playing on the building; the fire-escape rears itself against the lofty pile.

'God A'mighty, he won't be in time! Hold 'ard, Dan'l; let me go first!'

The fireman's helmet has appeared above the sill. He sees Dan looking at him with calm eyes, and the desperate woman pushing him back to hurl herself first into the helping arms.

He never forgets Dan's face and the look which meets his.

'Shame on you, woman! the child fust.'

The flames have burst the door open; they have swallowed up the table, and are crawling across the floor. Dan, panting before the fiery heat, looks up undismayed at the smoke-blackened face, but draws away from the hands held out to him.

'I aren't afeard; take 'er first. You'll come agen for me.'

Well done, little hero!

The man glances at the sheet of fire behind Dan with certainty in his heart that it will be too late. But the wild woman is already out of the window, and there is no time to lose. Dan watches the descent with anxious eyes. Before, however, they have reached the court a sudden agonising thought flashes across his mind. He has forgotten the cat. The flames have not reached the back window yet. There is time to get to the roof and bring her to safety. He quickly clambers through the narrow aperture, groping through the smoke. The tongues of fire seem to leap after this insignificant prey angrily. The snow on the roof is half melted by the heat and blackened by sparks

and smoke. The leaden gutter is full of slush. Dan cannot see the stars, for heavy black clouds encompass him. It is only down below that the lurid gleams reflect red lights. The cat and kittens are on the leeside of the chimneys, and the wind blows the smoke away from them. Used to sounds which make night hideous, safe in the keeping of Dan's tattered garment, his pets are wrapped in blissful unconsciousness of any special significance of turmoil. The child takes up the living bundle tenderly, with a deep joy to find it there, and turns to splash back to the window. The cat is roused by the sudden grip. She struggles wildly at the sight of a red light and falling sparks, with heavy clouds of smoke about her. Instinct teaches her that escape over the housetops is easy, and that her friend in his ignorance is carrying her to a fatal doom. As he stooped to reënter the room a spurt of flame darted out in triumphant assertion of its conquest. It is impossible now to get back to that other window where the fireman will presently come back to fetch him. Dan looked round him for any suggestion of escape. None anywhere. Closed in on both sides by higher buildings with unscalable walls or piles of chimneys. Dan stood alone and helpless in his isolated kingdom—the kingdom which was about to be swallowed up. He stood, not trembling, and with no outward sign of fear. His head was raised towards the heavens, which he could not see, in order that the thick smoke might not choke him. His tenacious hands held fast by the cat, though she fought, and bit, and scratched furiously. One last possibility presented itself to his dazed senses. Could he not leap to the next housetop across the narrow lane at the back? He had seen the cats do it often. He made a few steps forward, and looked over the abyss. Breathing hard, he drew back; the cat in his arms made another plunge, and freed herself. One kitten rolled out of Dan's grasp at the same time. Quickly seizing it in her teeth, the desperate tabby bounded across the chasm that Dan dared not attempt. She disappeared, while the little boy mechanically held on to the remaining kitten. He stands ankle deep in melted snow, while sparks and charred fragments are whirled about him; the hiss of falling water from the engine meets his ears at intervals, and he is unable to make his voice heard while human aid is so near. The moon's light is hidden now; but Dan's eyes still look upwards. The kitten lies peacefully cradled in his arms. Once more the tabby leaps across the street as if to show him how easily it can be done. Dan stoops gently as she claws him, giving her a last pat of encouragement, knowing it is a farewell one, before he places the kitten he holds in her mouth. A radiant joy looks out of his eyes for the last time as she disappears. Dan can hear loud cracks now, as the beams give

way in the stories beneath. The slush has poured away down the water-spouts, and the lead burns his bare feet. The wall of flame roars with a furious menace as it draws nearer to its little victim. Dan closes his eyes before the burning breath. Then he clasps his hand over his bare breast, and stands dauntlessly facing death. A longer louder crack than any that has gone before, a mighty rushing wave of mingled sound, and the roof has fallen in; a little child's sobbing cry is swallowed up in flames. Dan's kingdom has departed from him, and his light has gone out this side of the stars for ever.

O strange, sad irony to see the morning light creep so joyously out of the east, and smile with such serene indifference over the grave of a little unknown hero! The very same sun which had gilded Dan's possessions with its magic, bringing glad smiles to his eyes! A glorious winter day broke bright and clear over the charred and smoking upper stories of the house in Lamb-yard. The wondrous alchemy of light glorified vile dwelling-places. Jewels of icicles and snow hung upon the roofs and chimneys, showing a hundred dazzling facets beneath the enchanting touch of the sunlight. The sparrows on adjacent houses twittered more loudly than usual, as if making merry over their neighbours' domiciliary conflagration; perhaps even to sparrows the misfortunes of friends are not altogether displeasing. Cats looked down upon the scene of disaster without much concern, soon departing to prowl about more profitable regions. There were none to miss a little halting apparition. None? Ay, yes, one seemed to do so. A forlorn three-legged tabby sat above the ruins of the still smoking house, patiently watching, as though sooner or later an unfailing friend must put in an appearance. She turned a speculative glance towards neighbouring roofs as if rather out of her reckoning regarding them. Many days she came and sat at the same corner of observation; many nights she prowled about the charred ruins, mewing and wailing piteously. It appears there are retentive memories amongst animals. In vain the desolate tabby awaited the touch of Dan's vanished hand; in vain she listened for the sound of the hoarse suppressed croak of encouragement. The mangy fur could never feel the loving contact again, the grateful purr would never sound again in gratitude for hoarded scraps; tabby would end her days an outcast and a thief.

Night after night the stars came out in their old places; but Dan'l was beyond their consolation now; perhaps he could have told you and me more about them than we know. Christmas-day might have made itself clear to him in the new mansion where he had found rest; for surely, if there be a heaven for any of us, Dan'l had passed into one of the courts of its kingdom.

MY RIVAL;

Or a Week at an Irish Watering-place.

I wish Madge Merrington had not been so provokingly pretty, a perfect gossamer fairy, weaving her webs on all sides, and ensnaring with equal facility the wary and the incautious.

She was seven years old when I first knew her. I was eight-and-twenty, and, as a matter of course, I took her on my knee, petted and caressed her.

But years pass on—lucklessly for some, happily for one who steps from childhood to the fuller fairness of maturity. When Madge was fourteen it grew to be a question of nicety when my friendly admiration should cease, or rather how far it should go.

If I had not seen her so constantly the matter would have been less embarrassing. I should have left her at one date a charming child, and found her after due interval a graceful girl. But I was on the most intimate terms at her home. Mr. and Mrs. Merrington were my oldest friends, and as I lived on the same terrace with them in a select suburb of the Irish metropolis, they extended their hospitality to me with the warmth and impulsiveness of the genuine Hibernian heart. Now on what precise day or at what precise hour I was first to cease my coaxing attentions and bestow my last kiss, was a point which puzzled me considerably. Wherefore should I be unchecked in my demonstration one day, restrained the next? What reason could I, or any one, assign for an

abrupt change from freedom to frigidity? The difficulty, nevertheless, was solved for me in a manner which I had least expected.

One afternoon, in the month of May, I had returned early from my office, and had made my way direct to Merrington Villa, with a bouquet in my hand and a parcel under my arm. Madge had reached the mature age of fifteen on this memorable day, and this was an event I could not forget.

I found her alone in the drawing-room, which looked on a lovely little flower-ground at the back. She was in white muslin, with pale-pink bows, and large rosettes of the same hue on high-heeled shoes—rather a juvenile costume for the hour; but she was to have an early party of young friends, and was ready dressed for their arrival. I presented my gifts, and I don't think any one can blame me if I accepted her thanks; but at the instant the door opened, and Mrs. Merrington appeared.

I do not wish to be evasive, but I really cannot distinctly recall in what exact attitude Madge was at the crisis. I have a faint recollection of the touch of some dear little fingers at the tips of my whiskers. Another shock, however, overpowers the memory of even this electric thrill. It was that caused by the tone of Mrs. Merrington.

'Madge! come down this moment, miss! You are too great a girl to be on Mr. Hartwell's knee.'

I started ; but the young lady was more self-possessed.

'Dear old fellow !' she exclaimed. 'Why shouldn't I thank him ? Of course he must have a kiss for the big book and bouquet he has brought me on my birthday.'

And then, with a sweet roguish look, she was gone. A quick knock at the hall-door had brought new excitement to her thoughts, and I and the reproof were alike forgotten.

'Madge is very wild and wilful,' said Mrs. Merrington, drawing near to me, and fixing her hazel eyes full on mine. 'She forgets that she is not a child any longer.'

'She does not wish to forget friends, at all events,' I said quietly.

'Nor I either, Mr. Hartwell. But you see—you feel for yourself that she has grown up quickly ; in fact, she is tall and old for her age, though her manners are so unformed. I must not let her turn into a romp.'

'I shall not encourage the propensity, Mrs. Merrington,' was all I could say, for somehow a blow seemed struck at me as she spoke ; the gates of a too happy paradise were closed swiftly by an inflexible hand.

'That is all right,' returned the mother, with a smile. 'If Madge needs a hint again, I know you will not.'

After this day I visited only occasionally at the Merringtons'. Yet whenever I saw my young friend I felt that she could never be tutored into worldliness, and that the warm heart of the child was being preserved true and guileless through the more difficult stage of girlhood.

Three years passed ; Madge was eighteen, and a brighter being never dropped the garb of girlhood for that of lovely woman-

hood, and rose, fresh as a fairy in some dazzling transformation-scene, before the enrapt gaze. She was *petite* ; but her figure was perfect with the slightness which develops into roundness ; her hands small and white, with that rapidity and deftness in their grasp which marks the brisk decided character. Nothing betrays more weakness of temperament, more helpless indecision, than the limp touch which is given by some fingers. They seem to follow the slow motions of the brain, and to be unable to catch quickly or surely at any object upon earth. Madge had large hazel eyes, like her mother's, with a short but dark fringe of lashes, and their gaze was clear and open, more penetrating than pensive. Her hair was wavy, brown in its tint, and she wore it brushed in curly ripples off the whitest of temples. Of her charming rosy mouth I will not speak. It was the feature of all others which spoke for itself, and which smiled too straight into the heart to leave actual impression upon the memory.

Mr. and Mrs. Merrington did not see much company, and thus it came to pass that an invitation to the young lady to spend a month with a friend at a northern watering-place was met by her with a joyous response. The consent of her parents had been gained, and she set out radiantly on her trip. The month was July, the weather propitious ; Madge was to have sea-bathing, boating, riding, and dancing. If she were high-spirited before she left, what might not be expected from such exciting regimen as this !

The time for her stay passed over, and she did not return. A further extension of leave was asked for, and conceded amidst some laments from her parents on

the loneliness they were left to. Meanwhile I saw them more frequently than before. They were very kind to me, and when an office holiday came to both of us gentlemen, it was proposed at once that we should follow in the steps of the little truant, and taste for ourselves a week's refreshment among the Atlantic breezes on the far coast of Antrim. Madge had been staying at Fairbank, an inland residence about two miles from the coast; but on our arrival at the fashionable hotel of the adjacent watering-place, she was to join us there.

Too well I remember the exquisite evening on which we reached our destination. It was in the middle of August. The sea was grand, but not menacing; the sun was sinking in glowing splendour behind the bold promontory to the left of the town; and the air, blown across the crested waves from the far western world, was borne like a breath of new life upon the heart. The terraces were gay with promenaders, and every eye looked clear, every face bright, from contact with the exciting elements around. Sea breezes and waters had been tasted of till mists and moodiness were swept away, till sunshine and brilliancy seemed the predominant features of life. Just as the bell rang for the *table d'hôte* dinner a carriage drove up, and looking eagerly from the bow-window in front of the hotel I saw Madge spring out of it. She ran up the steps, and was greeted by her father and mother who stood in the portico, and lastly with a quiet smile and a grasp of the hand by me.

'I am so glad you have come,' was her pleasant welcome. 'We shall be so happy all together. I have been longing for you to be here.'

All three seemed included in this greeting, and indeed Madge, if more beautiful than ever, was unchanged in her sweet joyousness of manner towards myself.

After dinner we adjourned at once to the headland, which was a fashionable resort for an evening walk, and many a glance was attracted to the merry young lady of our party. For some time Madge tripped along on the grass promenade of the centre platform, where numerous strollers were enjoying, like ourselves, the parting loveliness of sea and sunset. Presently, however, she was off like a bird to the very verge of the surrounding cliffs, to catch a fuller view of the great Atlantic steamer bound for the New World. I sprang after her. A gust had risen, and Mrs. Merrington looked apprehensive.

'O, there is no fear,' was Madge's rejoinder to my expostulation. 'I am as sure-footed as a goat, I am made for high life!' and her sweet lips parted in their loveliest smile.

'Madge, come back!' cried her mother. 'You are too giddy.'

'No, not the least light-headed, I assure you, mamma.'

'Light-footed, rather?' I suggested.

'Yes, and light-hearted too, I hope!'

'There is no doubt of that.'

'O, how I wish Harry was here!' was her quick exclamation. 'We should be all the merrier then.'

'Harry? Who is he?' I inquired.

She looked at me for an instant; then lowered her eyes, and the slightest flush rose into her face.

'O, a great friend of mine. Did mamma not tell you?' she murmured. 'We met at Fairbank.'

'Indeed! And you like him very much?'

'Yes,' with another mischiev-

ous glance. 'Have you any objection?'

'Of course not. If you are pleased, that is enough for me.'

'Well, Harry is delightful,' she pursued. 'You would think so yourself. We were inseparable at once. Mamma knows all about it, and has asked my dear Harry to join us here to-morrow. I shall be quite happy then.' And a beautiful light came into her eyes—a light which I could not mistake.

I was silent for a while, and we walked on together, Mr. and Mrs. Merrington having turned back on the promenade.

'I suppose he is young?' I hazarded, after a pause.

'Yes, not old, certainly, but a good many years in advance of me.'

'And well-looking?'

'Too handsome, I think. That is my one objection.'

'It is no great drawback, Madge,' and I sighed.

She caught the sigh, and the half-sad expression that accompanied it, for she questioned me the next instant, with her eyes fixed on my face.

'What makes you so grave, Mr. Hartwell?'

'I suppose because I am growing gray,' was my response.

'What nonsense! Your hair is just the right hue; none else would suit you so well.'

'But it does not make a younger man of me.'

'And why wish to be young? What good would it do you?'

This was a poser certainly; and fearing I was getting on hazardous ground, I hastened to change the conversation. I began to think Madge something of a coquette. She knew—she must have known—what I felt, that I was wild enough to love her, and yet she restrained in no way her

fascinations; she looked at me with her bewildering eyes, smiled on me with her enchanting lips, and then all but laughed at me if I showed sentiment or susceptibility. She could talk of 'Harry' and her admiration for him with coy delight, and expatiate on his youth and attractiveness, while I, grave and saddened, was expected to listen and congratulate.

On returning to the hotel we adjourned to the inner saloon at the end of the long coffee-room, which we found pretty well filled with company. It was amusing to watch the groups of friends who chatted together, and of strangers who eyed one another. A scanning glance was given to each personage who entered, and there was either a quick greeting from some amongst the party, or the new-comer found himself condemned to a sort of suspicious isolation. We, being four in number, were independent of such scant courtesy as might be offered, and contented ourselves with the accommodation of a comfortable couch and the entertainment of watching the scene from a theatrical point of view.

There were several Americans amongst the assembly, and these were easily recognised by their gesticulations, their elaborate dress on the ladies' part, and their harshly attuned voices in the case of the men.

Madge could scarcely restrain her smiles at one specimen of the fraternity, who wore his red hair in a flame-like pyramid with a sort of crater in the middle. He spouted forth volubly as he stood in a conspicuous position in the room, his small eyes making the most of their vision, and a long hand extended 'right ahead,' as he would himself express it.

'Your Cosway,' he exclaimed, after some expatiation on the

scenery of the locality—'your Cosway, as I take it, is a worked-out viaduct, overwashed now by our big ocean; and your two specks of islands were once won—'

'Won! by whom?' said a supercilious-looking gentleman, who twirled a yellow moustache.

'One, I said—run up together.'

'I'm as glad they're a trifle apart now,' interposed a bluff black man, whose accent flavoured somewhat too strongly of Tipperary. 'We are near enough to please me an' many others too. The farther off the better from those who are neither kin nor kind.'

'You're a bit of a Home Ruler, I guess?' rejoined the American.

'I'm for Home Rule, if that's what you mean. We haven't got it yet.'

'Nor won't for many a day, while there's a stone on the Giant's Causeway or a northern foot on the ground.'

This was declaimed in a vehement brogue by another listener. His stanch figure, broad open features, and freckled face stamped him at once as the genuine Orangeman of the North, who is proud of his country, his prowess, and his Protestantism.

'You're a Belfast boy, perhaps?' retorted the representative of the South. 'You can spin a yarn of linen, I make no doubt, but you had better leave the talk alone. You can't run on there.'

'I can cut short if I can't run on,' was the retort, 'and that's sometimes more to the point,' and he turned off abruptly.

At this juncture a lady with prompt tact rose to propose some music. She glided over to a friend who showed herself pleasantly acquiescent, and in her turn moved to the piano, which a gentleman opened for her.

The southern, apparently an

old acquaintance of the musician at once sprang forwards.

'A song of my own choosing then, Mrs. Lanyon,' he said. 'You can't refuse it to me. Let us have "The Wearing of the Green."'

'No, no!' cried a dozen voices.

But at the moment the lady began, in a voice so sweet that no one could hush it, the somewhat rebel words:

'Farewell, for I must leave thee,
My own, my native shore,
And, doomed in foreign lands to dwell,
May never see thee more;
For laws, our tyrant laws, have said
That seas must roll between
Old Erin and her faithful sons
That love to wear the green.
Yet whatso'er our fate may be
When oceans wash between,
Her truest sons will ever sing
The wearing of the green.'

My father loved his country,
And sleeps within her breast,
While I, that would have died for her,
Must never so be blest.
Those tears my mother shed for me—
Far fewer they had been
If I had proved a traitor
To the wearing of the green.
Yet brighter days will surely come
Than those that we have seen,
When Erin's sons may proudly sing
"The Wearing of the Green."

The Orangeman had risen, and was listening with such a knit brow that some stormy passage seemed inevitable, till, just as the last note died away, the air was changed with pantomimic rapidity, and the loyal chords rang forth of 'The Boyne Water.'

Every one laughed then. Anger at the charming *mélange* was impossible. Even the Tipperary blood seemed restrained from ebullition by the soothing potion which had been first drunk in, and presently all settled down in detachments to chess, cards, or music.

The next day was bright and bracing, and at ten o'clock our party mounted the long car which starts from the hotel at that hour for the Giant's Causeway.

I had a place beside Madge, and

was content. She, on her part, looked bewitching in a gipsy hat crowned with wild flowers, and talked alternately to me and a companion on the left. The acquaintance of the latter gentleman she had made at the *table d'hôte*. He was a professor from the Belfast College, wore spectacles and a sort of astrologer's hat, and was sufficiently antiquated to stifle any pang of jealousy I might have felt, and give me a sensation of rejuvenescence and agility which was very gratifying.

I could bound off the car quicker than he on our arrival, offer Madge my hand, and carry her off, the first of the pedestrians, for the cliffs. The sea was wild and lovely. A north-westerly wind blew the waves in foaming cascades upon the rocks and strand, and the curious pipe-like pillars of the great organ facing seaward were burnished by a gleam of the most golden sunlight.

Presently I heard Mrs. Merriington's voice behind.

'Madge, is it in your pink llama you are? That looks too glaring out of doors. You should only wear it in the evenings.'

The young lady had just thrown off a gray cloak which had enveloped her on the drive, and stood forth brightly in the above apparel.

'But why, mamma?' she responded. 'What harm, if it is pretty? Daylight should be as honoured as gaalight. I am not afraid of a colour.'

She certainly need not be so, while her fair faultless complexion eclipsed all in brilliancy, and threw every tint, even of rose, into the shade.

'We shall be hurried on our return, and have no time to dress,' she confided to me roguishly, 'and Harry will have arrived then.'

'O, that accounts for all.'

'All what?'

'Your gaiety and your garb.'

'But when am I grave? Do you ever see me dull, Mr. Hartwell?'

'No, in truth; but there are degrees even of liveliness. Sunshine in the heart throws the strongest light of all. You know what you told me—"When Harry comes I shall be quite happy." Does not that imply a want now?'

'Ah, don't criticise me or my words; don't draw logical conclusions. I speak what I think at the moment. But there are many moments—many moods.'

'The more the merrier in your case, I think.' And saying this I gave her my hand to help her over a barrier of rock which was our first approach to the Causeway. The rest of the party were on a more circuitous path, and followed us leisurely.

Madge was agile enough to accept but little assistance, and she stepped lightly from stone to stone till we had gained the further projection of broken columns fitting curiously into one another, which our American would describe as 'the Viaduct.'

This rocky groundwork showed fragments of every fantastic shape, some regular, others irregular, round, triangular, octagon, and a nonagon. Above us were pillars of colossal height, inlaid, as it were, into the dark cliffs; while the ocean, stretching out far before our gaze, dashed its noisy waters upon the basement of the pedestals, and fled in more foaming waves towards the mouth of the caves beyond.

'We must have a boat!' cried Madge. 'See, there is a party in one at this moment. They are at the entrance of the large cavern. How they toss up and down in the surge! Harry thinks boating slow work; but there is nothing

tame, I am sure, in a row about here.'

Harry again! How I hated the name, and especially the soft blush that announced it! Looking at Madge, I saw that sparkle in her eye which betrayed her secret, and struck a blow equally at my own presumption.

The professor came up just then, and began some disquisition on geological researches. He brought out his knowledge in allusions to stratified and igneous rocks, to the classes of strata comprising palæozoic, post-tertiary, &c., and might have wandered on into still more puzzling terms, had not Madge shown something of impatience.

She gladly seconded my move for an adjournment to the heights above us, which were covered with a mossy undulating turf, and looked inviting for the picnic luncheon that was in prospect.

The repast having been spread and partaken of, Madge was the first to proclaim its conclusion, and dart in her usual impulsive way to the very verge of a cliff.

'Such a great sea-gull!' she cried. 'He has just risen from the crag beneath us, and flies direct seaward. A good omen for the weather—is it not? O, I should love to take wing in that way! I feel really as if I could flit off quite securely, and alight on the head of one of those pedestrians below.'

'You would be much more likely to alight on your own,' said her father, pulling her back somewhat brusquely from her airy situation. 'If you feel safe yourself, Madge, that is no reason for making your mother and every one else uncomfortable about you.'

The young lady succumbed to this reproof, and was tolerably amenable for the rest of the morning.

On our return to the hotel she became excited anew. At the same time she did not try to escape from my companionship, but, having put a question to the waiter, she turned to me with a smile, and announced that 'Harry' was awaiting her in the inner saloon, and asked if I would not wish to be introduced. I acquiesced with the readiness which is allied to curiosity, and followed her promptly. I could not but wonder to myself, as we traversed the coffee-room, at the gentleman's tardiness in hastening forth to meet her. He could scarcely fail to have seen the long car drive up to the door as it passed the windows of the drawing-room, and yet she was left to seek him out, instead of accepting the first greetings and attentions at his hands.

However, Madge seemed perfectly satisfied, and it was assuredly not my part to desire a more lover-like alacrity.

The door of the saloon was closed, and as Madge had her grasp on the handle she said to me in a whisper,

'Now what do you expect? Tell me beforehand.'

'An Adonis, of course,' was my reply. 'But I am afraid not a very active one. He ought to have been earlier on the scene.'

She laughed. 'You are a famous guesser. Indolence is just the one fault I have to find;' and thereupon the door was thrown open and she went impulsively forwards.

At this hour the room was usually deserted, and a glance showed me that it contained but a single occupant. I paused in perplexity, and a strange sensation sent a throbbing to my heart. Madge had her arms round some one's neck; her soft clinging embrace was given with a warmth and impulsiveness which would have been too much for me under

other circumstances. As it was, I felt my colour rise, and, stepping closer, I uttered her name in quick accents,

'Madge, Madge! who is this?'

She was round in an instant, with her hazel eyes full of their merriest light.

'My friend *Harrie*. Won't you recognise her? Allow me to introduce you in full form. Mr. Hartwell, Miss Henrietta Delancey.'

Never, I think, had I greeted a stranger with such impetuous delight before. I am almost afraid that my excessive eagerness must have been mistaken for familiarity; for Miss Henrietta, who was very handsome, gave me a scanning glance from her fine eyes, and drew back with the slightest degree of hauteur. Her expression was by no means so sweet as Madge's, though she had the advantage of her in height, and possibly in what is termed *style*.

Madge evidently admired her immensely, and clung about her in a delighted way which was very childlike and charming. I had still, I found, a rival in 'Harrie;' for words and smiles were all given in this quarter now, and I was left pretty much to the task of reflection till we were out on the hill in the evening for our usual promenade. Miss Delancey had accepted then the escort of an old acquaintance, whom she had met unexpectedly at the *table d'hôte*, and Madge was content perforce to fall back on my companionship. She did it with so good a grace that I had to forgive her everything—her previous artifice and her recent neglect. I could not but call her to some account, however, as we found ourselves side by side.

'Why did you tell me it was a gentleman friend I was to expect?' I questioned, with a full glance be-

neath her hat. She met the look with wide-open eyes.

'I never said so; never, indeed, Mr. Hartwell.'

'Well, you allowed me to assume it.'

'O, the mistake was a too amusing one to be set right. You spoke so touchingly of "*Harry*," looked forward so longingly to his advent.'

'I doubt about the latter part of that statement, Miss Madge. I should have been quite satisfied never to see the expected guest, if you had been of the same mind.'

'And why, pray, if you pictured him so fascinating?'

'Possibly for that very reason. Have you ever heard of such a thing as jealousy?'

The flush deepened on Madge's cheek; but then she indulged so often in this bewildering loveliness I could not appropriate anything special from the token.

At the moment we encountered Mr. and Mrs. Merrington, also Miss Delancey and her escort. They were on the return walk, and we were going onwards towards the extreme end of the promontory, where Madge had promised to show me a nook amongst the crags which was her favourite seat.

'Come, Madge, my child, you must turn now,' said her mother. 'The evenings are not what they were. You have no wrappings on, and may take cold.'

'O mamma, just one round more!' she pleaded; 'we have not had half a walk. I want to bring Mr. Hartwell to the point.'

There was a laugh from Miss Harrie.

'Indeed, Madge! That is a free admission, certainly. We must not interrupt so interesting a *tête-à-tête*;' and with a playful gesture she and her companion

passed us. Mr. and Mrs. Merington followed; but Madge knew me too well to feel embarrassment, and she kept to her first intention.

'Madge,' I said as we went onwards, 'I am in your hands now. Lead me to some charmed spot.'

'Do you want to be enchanted?'

'Scarcely that. The magic chains are too fast already; but I would cast a spell over you. In this delicious dreamy air it might be possible.'

'And not in daylight? You have given me fair warning. I refuse to be deluded.'

'Illusion I spoke of; but if you prefer a reality—'

I stopped, for her gaze was turned on me, and something in its questioning light forbade interrogation of mine.

'There is my nook!' she exclaimed the next instant. 'Far down in the steepest part of the cliff, where no passer-by can penetrate. Seated there, looking straight seawards, I can forget the whole world.'

'And you enjoy that?'

'When I am selfish.'

'You give it a right term.

Whenever you are thus hard upon others, be so upon yourself.'

We were watching the last glimpse of sunset as we spoke. The globe of fire, which had floated, as it were, on the surface of the water, vanished with a strange suddenness from our eyes, and at the moment a soft vapoury atmosphere replaced the former radiancy.

Madge turned landwards with one of her swift motions.

'We must hasten now,' she said; 'my mother will be lamenting the loss of my cloud. I am to follow the sky, it seems, and when it wraps itself up I must do the same.'

'Well, you like to look high, I remember that.'

She only smiled, made no disclaimer. Yet the charge was for ever refuted when I grew aspiring on my part; and to a question put to her at last no denial rose, either, to her lips.

With this happiness my stay at the seaside ended. It was a farewell to the place, but not to what had passed in it. The memories of the visit and its summer lights were to live in a brightness which has had no sunset.

STRETCHED OUT.

A Rosario Police Sketch.

THE Argentine Republican Government cannot boast of its army, at least so far as the *morale* is concerned. The greater portion of the military force there is composed of convicted prisoners, who, after being transported to some one or other of the numerous frontier forts, erected for the purpose of guarding against Indian invasions, are generally drafted into the regular army, where they are by no means always successful in overcoming their natural disposition to misbehave. The *serénos*, or police, are organised on much the same system, especially in some of the interior provinces. In fact, the old idea of 'setting a thief to catch a thief' is here practically carried out.

Mr. Huntly was one of those happy-hearted, easy-minded Englishmen who are often met with abroad, and had been my guest for some considerable time. He did not 'take to' the dull routine of camp life—for my estancia was far out on the prairies—and he was always glad of an excuse to visit the neighbouring port town of Rosario, where the continual bustle and excitement were far more congenial to his nature than walking to and fro between the stils of a plough. Mr. Huntly, as the sequel will show, got more excitement than he expected during his last stay in the town just referred to.

On a glorious morning of one of the long bright summer days peculiar to southern latitudes, having some business to transact

in Rosario, I had just given orders for my riding-horse to be saddled, when Mr. Huntly informing me that he had a great desire to go in my stead, I accepted him as my temporary agent, and giving him the necessary instructions, we shook hands and parted, he for his favourite little town, and I to return to my work on the farm.

The evening was well advanced when my friend arrived in Rosario, and his long ride had given him a keen appetite, which took some time to be satisfied, notwithstanding the substantial hot supper that he ordered on his arrival at the hotel. After his meal, Mr. Huntly passed an hour or two chatting with some newly-arrived countrymen, who were able and willing to post him up in the latest news from his native country.

The hour would be nearly midnight, when my friend, feeling no inclination to retire for the night, left his hotel for a quiet stroll and a meditative smoke. Although by no means a sentimental or poetically inclined man, the loveliness of the evening induced him to extend his walk to the suburbs of the town, where the heavy dew had settled down on many a fair and sweet-scented plant growing in the nicely-kept gardens surrounding the numerous handsome villas. Presently my guest began to consider the lateness of the hour, and the advisability of a good sleep after his long journey; and he was just making up

his mind to return to the hotel, when two serénos or night-watchmen roughly accosted him, demanding to know where he was going to so late in the night. Mr. Huntly, who had lived several years in the country, and knew the Spanish language well, explained to them that he was out for an evening smoke. This simple answer failed to satisfy his challengers, who now advanced to his side, threatening to take him to the 'lock-up.'

'Lock me up!' cried the astonished Mr. Huntly. 'What, in the name of goodness, would you do that for?'

'Muy bueno' (very good); 'we know you are armed—all foreigners are; and our town laws forbid any one to carry firearms, unless by special license.'

'I should think,' answered my friend, who was very blunt in his remarks when annoyed, 'I should think we would require weapons to protect ourselves from such villainous police as your miserable town possesses; and I can easily tell that you two are no better than your brother officials.'

'We want firearms, not insolence,' said one of the serénos, getting his long lance into position.

'At the same time,' added the other, 'we do not wish to be hard upon an ignorant stranger; so if you will give up your revolver and a few silver dollars, we will let you go in peace, and say no more about the matter.'

'I'll see both of you in the middle of the Rio Parana first!' indignantly exclaimed my friend, trying to conclude the interview by walking off.

In this move he was hastily interrupted by the serénos, who, presenting their lances on either side, defied him to move at the peril of his life. Mr. Huntly had

a revolver upon him; but, unfortunately, having brought it to town in order to be repaired, it was consequently unloaded. He showed them the useless weapon, and explained the state it was in; then, taking a knife from his pocket, he assured the watchmen he had no other 'missile' concealed about his person. The only response was a rude laugh, with the remark that it was even unlawful to be armed with knives, especially after dark.

My friend was not the man to let his spirits be easily damped, and took rather a jocular view of the proceedings as far as they had yet gone. Looking the serénos full in the face, he laughingly inquired,

'You couple of idiots appear to be under the impression that I carry a penknife with me, in order to conquer my enemies and do battle with my foes. How do you suppose I can cut up my tobacco without a knife? for you both know very well we English invariably use cake-tobacco here. Besides, how about keeping my finger-nails short and clean? Perhaps I should hang a pair of scissors round my waist for the purpose? But then scissors will likely also be counted as dangerous articles of war by your paternal Government.'

'Will you go quietly to prison, or remain there with two or three lance-thrusts through your infernally impudent carcass?' briefly inquired one of the watchmen.

'O, by the bye, I forgot to mention that there lies in my waistcoat-pocket a full-blown toothpick. Should I have also left it at home?' inquired my friend, as he still stood his ground, in spite of the angry signals made by his captors to move on with them.

At this juncture three additional serénos came upon the scene, and left Mr. Huntly no alternative but to allow himself to be conducted by this body-guard prisonwards. Several times during their march they came to a halt, and advised their prisoner to give up what firearms and money he had, and he would be set free. But my friend was now determined to follow the matter out to its end, and flatly refused to give a dollar to each of his captors, to which demand they had gradually decreased as the police-station was reached.

Becoming convinced that their prisoner would not bribe them to let him free on any terms whatever, the enraged serénos gave him in charge to a sleepy official within the prison-yard. This latter individual refused decisively to hear any protest from Mr. Huntly, and ordering his guard to relieve him of any firearms he might possess, and then to shut him in a cell for the night, he condescended to inform the unhappy captive that a full investigation would be made in the morning, but until then nothing could be done. Mr. Huntly was then locked into a wretched little hole, barely large enough to contain a bench and a rude canvas bed, with one coarse heavy counterpane, there being neither pillow nor mattress. Fatigued with his journey and the succeeding excitement, he soon fell asleep, being comparatively easy in his mind, as he felt assured all would be made right on the morrow.

Mr. Huntly would not have dropped off to sleep so composedly had he known what was going to happen to him, and that very soon too. While giving up his revolver and knife in the guard-room, my friend had resolutely refused to permit his captors to search his

pockets, and the sleepy official, to avoid trouble, had allowed him to have his own way in this respect; the serénos protesting meanwhile that their prisoner must have many valuables upon him, as he was so fearful of being searched. Mr. Huntly had gone to bed without undressing. The night felt comparatively cold, after the great heat of the summer day, and, besides, the bed had only one covering, and did not appear to be very clean. His sleep had not lasted long when he became conscious of being slightly moved to one side; then, as sleep quickly left him, he felt the hot breath of some one directly over his face. He, fortunately, had sufficient presence of mind to keep perfectly quiet, and cautiously raising an eyelid, there, to his horror, bending closely over him, was one of the serénos who had helped to disarm him in the guard-room. The wretch held a long double-edged knife, or rather dagger, close to his throat, while with the other hand he was feeling under the bed-clothes for Mr. Huntly's pockets. On perceiving his perilous position, my friend could not check himself from starting slightly; and although the movement was almost imperceptible, it was sufficient to make the robber suspicious, and holding the dagger closer to his victim's throat, he watched intently for any sign of wakefulness. It was only by almost superhuman efforts that Mr. Huntly succeeded in refraining from making any more visible signs of consciousness; and his unwelcome visitor gradually regained confidence, and resuming the search, was successful in appropriating to himself my friend's handsome gold watch and some fifty dollars. This proceeding occupied a considerable time, the

seréno using every precaution to avoid disturbing his human prey, as he carefully felt in all the pockets of the clothes which Mr. Huntly then wore. Certainly it was very trying for my unfortunate friend : the time passed so slowly ; and then to lie there, quietly submitting to such an outrage, and that terrible dagger with its keen sharp point resting on his throat. The slightest downward move of the seréno's hand, and the weapon would kill him. The suspense was becoming too awful to be borne. Poor Huntly was a wild careless fellow, and full well he knew how little fit he then was to meet his seeming doom. We might here desert him for a time, and have a good spell of moralising upon the uncertainty of life, &c. ; but as such a proceeding would be both cruel to our anxious hero and our trusting readers, we mercifully refrain from doing so. Would that all authors were equally thoughtful !

The seréno, having got what he wanted, now slowly crept to the door. Mr. Huntly, very much relieved, in more senses than one, incautiously turned partly over in bed, to get a better view of the retiring robber, who, hearing the movement, hastened back to the bedside, barely allowing his victim time to resume his apparently sleeping condition. The dagger was again held in fearful readiness, and its owner muttered some Spanish oaths, as if, though unwilling to commit murder unless as a necessary precaution, he felt it incumbent upon him to give vent to his feelings in some form or other. Retiring again from the bed, he stood at the cell-door for some time listening attentively. All being quiet, the seréno gently left the apartment, closing the door after him. With one bound, Mr. Huntly was now at the door,

shoving the bench against it as an obstruction to his unwelcome guest, should he wish to return. But why should he remain there, and allow his enemy to get safely away ? That would be very foolish ; so, kicking the form to one side, he made to open the door, intending to hasten along the passage and raise an alarm. His intentions, no doubt, were very good ; but unfortunately he was unable to carry them out. The cell-door only opened from the outside ; and so, after kicking and shouting till he was tired, he resigned himself to the task of waiting as patiently as possible for the morning, when surely some one of the prison officials would visit him.

Mr. Huntly waited—he could not do otherwise—but not with patience. Sleep was out of the question ; and he paced up and down the limited compartment in a state bordering on madness. Daylight came at last, but no relief, and it was fully nine o'clock. Mr. Huntly thought it would be about five in the afternoon then, when a turnkey entered, and requested the prisoner to follow him. He was handed over to the superintendent of police, a smart-looking official, who had been to England several times, and was, consequently, much less prejudiced against Englishmen than most of his untravelled countrymen are. Mr. Huntly gave a full account of the whole affair ; and, instead of exciting any surprise, the relation was listened to by the official without any comment, as if such things were of constant occurrence ; and no doubt they were.

'Well, señor,' replied the superintendent, when Mr. Huntly had finished his story, 'I will not at present ask for any description of the seréno whom you say robbed you last night. All the police of

the town are under my supervision; and I think I know the very man to whom you refer. To make sure of your accusation being correct, I shall, during the day, have all the police force mustered in the yard here, in three separate detachments, which you will have an opportunity of inspecting, and so picking out your man. I shall know, of course, by the muster-roll should any one absent himself, which, however, is very unlikely, as it would look suspicious. Accept meantime my regret in your having been caused this annoyance, and, believe me, I shall do my best to restore any property you may have lost. Come here at midday, when the first squad will be ready for your inspection.'

Don José Vasquez, the police superintendent, here bowed Mr. Huntly out, hoping to have the pleasure of seeing him back there at noon precisely.

When my friend returned to the yard at the appointed time, he saw some fifty *serénos* drawn up in line, of whom he took particular notice, passing slowly along the column, but his man was not amongst them. Mr. Huntly had another inspection later on in the day, with a similar result. The third detachment would not be there till sunset; so my friend went back to his hotel, and had a good dinner 'on trust.' He then sauntered down to the busy little harbour, and got so interested in the bustle and constant change of scene that he nearly made himself too late for his last appointment with Don José Vasquez. Arriving in the yard just as the detachment was about to be dismissed, he hurriedly made his inspection, but could not recognise the *seréno* he was in search of.

'Señor,' said the superintendent, addressing the disappointed

Mr. Huntly, 'you have now seen all the police, and yet say the man whom you accuse of robbing you is not present. I am sorry to discredit your statement; but I think it must have been all a dream.'

'Dreams do not run away with people's watches and money, Don José.'

'True, my friend. You had better try and find your man in this last detachment. I have no more squads to show you.'

'He is not there. I should know the villain a mile off.'

'You would swear to that?'

'Most assuredly.'

'Well,' replied the police superintendent, with a sly smile, 'to try you thoroughly, I purposely kept back the *seréno* I told you I thought would be the guilty party. You will now see him; and I expect he will turn out to be your midnight visitor.'

Don José Vasquez then conducted my friend to a cell of the prison, where, heavily ironed and handcuffed, he beheld the *seréno* of whom he was in search. Both the superintendent and Mr. Huntly questioned and cross-questioned the prisoner, but could elicit no further reply than a sturdy denial of any knowledge on the *seréno's* part of the affair altogether. My friend was perfectly astounded at the rogue's impudence. To think that a few hours before this wretch had, while stealing everything from him, held a dagger in such a position as to greatly endanger his life, and now the fellow denied all knowledge of any such crime.

The superintendent of police now remarked that 'he would very soon compel the prisoner to sing another song,' and gave orders for the 'stretcher' to be prepared. The unhappy *seréno* uttered a low groan on hearing this, as well he knew his coming fate. An

official entering presently announced that the 'machine' was in readiness.

The seréno was now carried out to the yard, and placed flat on his back on the ground, and his fetters removed. The stretching apparatus now made its appearance, and certainly it was a primitive-looking affair. Four stout thongs of untanned hide, in a wet state, were fastened to the prisoner, two being tied round his wrists, and the other two round his ankles. Each thong was then stretched, as far as possible, away from the limb to which it was attached, and then firmly secured by strong iron pegs driven into the ground. A great strain was thus effectually put upon both arms and legs, and was gradually increased as the moistened hide dried, causing it to contract. To accelerate the contraction, however, a stick was used as a lever to increase the strain, being twisted in the thongs, and presently the muscles of the unfortunate wretch began to crack, and each sinew to swell. After torturing the seréno till big drops of agony stood on his forehead, Don José inquired if he was ready to confess.

'No, patron,' groaned the sufferer. 'I am innocent, and you will be my murderer.'

'Tighten the cords,' commanded the superintendent; and the levers were again put in force, and the strain increased.

'*Santa Maria mia!*' yelled the wretch, now quivering with agony, his eyes protruding from their sockets with horrible ghastliness.

'You will kill the man,' interposed Mr. Huntly, now sickened, and nearly fainting at the grim exhibition.

'Not a bit of it,' replied Don José; 'these fellows are tough, and can bear up wonderfully; he will give in presently.'

'Hold, I will confess all!' now cried the seréno; and the strain on the thongs was relaxed. 'It is true I took the watch and money of the English señor, and I can return him his watch; but the dollars I lost playing at cards.'

'O, I see you are only half repentant,' laughed the official, again ordering the torture to be resumed. The wretch was now a pitiful sight—bathed in sweat, and the veins discoloured and swollen, looking as if they would burst. The awful strain, now distorting the vessels of his throat, prevented him from crying out. Don José, knowing this, ordered his men to again loosen the cords, and, waiting until the seréno had regained the power of speech, he inquired if the dollars had been recovered yet.

'Si, señor,' cried the prisoner: 'everything will be found in my house; only release me from this fearful death.'

Don José Vasquez gave him another little 'stretch,' just, as he remarked, 'to impress his memory well.' The seréno, now in a dead swoon, was carried back to his cell.

By the morrow, my friend, with the aid of Don José, the police superintendent, had recovered the stolen property. The guilty seréno was banished to one of the frontier forts, from where he would, no doubt, be eventually drafted into the army, or else back to the police force.

Many a time I had occasion to transact business in Rosario, but my friend Mr. Huntly never again volunteered to act as my agent. He confessed to having had quite sufficient town excitement for a season, and contented himself roaming amongst the furrows, as he turned up the face of Mother Earth with the light American plough drawn by lumbering oxen.

THE SENIOR PARTNER.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL, AUTHOR OF 'GEORGE GEITH,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MR M'CULLAGH TRIUMPHANT.

STILL over the waves of success bounded that gallant bark, Pousnett & Co. (Limited); and if it were possible for a greater success to have been compassed than was achieved by the senior partner, when he generously allowed the general public to participate in the profits of his business, it was when he consented to dispose of the barren tract of waste land adjoining Norman Towre, and was good enough to sell his interest in it for fifty thousand pounds in solid cash, and five hundred paid-up shares, value ten pounds each. Previously having manipulated sales of portions of the property to a considerable extent, Mr. Snow calculated he could not have netted less than a hundred and thirty thousand pounds on the transaction, to say nothing of Norman Castle, where he meant for the future, when not in London, to reside.

His house on the Thames was already let for a hydropathic establishment, and the land surrounding it, except a portion of the grounds and gardens, cut up into plots for the erection of villa residences. So far as worldly success can make a man happy, Mr. Pousnett ought to have been esteemed fortunate; but there is always a fox gnawing somewhere. The senior partner's fox being the state of his health, he did not conceal the fact so sedulously as might have been the case other-

wise—if, for example, his purse instead of himself had been sick. Ere long, therefore, Mr. Pousnett's 'good friends' in the City knew the 'strain had been too much for him;' and with wonderful unanimity they all began to regret he could not be induced to consider himself in time.

When pressed by anxious inquirers, who button-holed him to get an explicit answer, Mr. Pousnett confessed with a laugh that all the doctors his 'better-half insisted on his consulting' were agreed he had overworked himself, and declared nothing but complete rest could do him any good.

'So I must remain bad,' finished Mr. Pousnett; 'for if those wise men know how I am to get away, I am sure I do not.'

In spite of this assertion, however, he fell into the habit of running out of town often on Saturdays, and not returning till Tuesday in the following week; then he tried the effect of a short tour on the Continent; then he went with Sir Somebody Somebody for a trip in his yacht, which did more for his health than anything he had yet tried; then, in the year '59, he suddenly experienced a relapse; and, at the beginning of 1860, just after the tremendous frost which ushered in that January, it was formally announced Mr. Pousnett felt himself 'unable longer to hold the responsible post, the duties of which he had hitherto fulfilled, and which, for the future, would be discharged by

Mr. Robert McCullagh, whose thorough knowledge of the business, &c.

Great sympathy was expressed for Mr. Pousnett, great confidence declared in Mr. Robert McCullagh; the votes of condolence, the votes of thanks, the votes of regret because Mr. Pousnett was leaving the board, the votes of pleasure because Robert McCullagh was coming more prominently forward, were all duly proposed, seconded, passed, and recorded in the newspapers. A large dividend was declared, a satisfactory statement of affairs published; the auditors vouched they had examined the accounts, and found them correct. So much was placed to the reserve fund, so much allotted to the shareholders. Every one was pleased—unless, indeed, it might be Mr. Pousnett, who uttered his thanks for the kindly feeling manifested in a few broken, but well-chosen, words; and who, after the meeting, walked away with Lord Cresham, looking very sad and downcast, but yet a mere boy in comparison with his son-in-law.

Thus exit Mr. Pousnett, *en route* to the Continent. He was going to the south of France for his health. Long before this incident, however, Mr. Alty had retired from the direction also. Like his great prototype, he did not do so till all his affairs were set in order, his shares sold, everything which it seemed necessary to do finished.

It was as well; for all unconsciously Mr. Alty's departure from the board-room of Pousnett (Limited) meant the commencement of a longer journey than that contemplated by Mr. Pousnett.

He was taken ill very suddenly and seriously; and before Mr. Snow, who had been sent for in hot haste, could arrive, the work

begun by Time was finished by Death, and the only thing which remained in the old dingy house with the shabby furniture at Bow of the man who had been master of it was a quiet silent figure covered with a white sheet, that would never trouble itself any more about the state of the money market, or the defalcations of tenants, or the shortcomings of borrowers, or find delight in pheasants and good wines, and the freshest of fresh country butter, and the plumpest turkey that ever graced a Christmas dinner.

Mr. Snow followed him to his last home in that sorrowful cemetery at Ilford, which produces so weird an effect on the mind when one comes upon it suddenly and unexpectedly from the breeze-laden Flats of Wanstead.

It was impossible to lay him with his father at Limehouse; and years before he had, with his usual foresight and prudence, invested in a vault at Ilford, where a brother and sister, buried at their own proper and individual expense, were affectionately awaiting his arrival.

Both as he went and returned Mr. Snow wondered whether Mr. Alty had left him anything, and, if so, how much. Such thoughts will intrude even on mournful occasions; and the drive to and from Ilford, through Stratford and along the Romford-road, is of a description to require something pleasant to enliven it.

The matter was soon set at rest. With commendable promptitude the will was produced and read. Some nephews and nieces and cousins, and persons who called themselves old friends, were present; but they might as well have stayed away, for Jacob Alty, who during his lifetime had never given one farthing he could help to the widow or the orphan, who hated the poor and made no secret

of his antipathy, left everything of which he died possessed—except the house at Bow and two hundred a year for the use of his sister, and fifty pounds apiece to his executors—to found and endow a Charity to be called ‘The Jacob Alty Almshouses;’ to fit up and maintain a ward in the London Hospital, he directed should be named ‘The Jacob Alty Ward;’ to furnishing an annual Christmas dinner, to be designated ‘The Jacob Alty Christmas Dinner,’ for fifty poor persons, not under sixty years of age, residents in the parish of Limehouse, and fifty not under sixty from the parish of Bow; and a legacy of a hundred pounds each to ten religious and medical societies, the names of which it would be as tedious for any one not a lawyer, and paid for his time, to read, as it certainly would prove to write.

‘Well, Mr. Snow,’ said Miss Alty, in commentary, when they were left alone.

‘Well, Miss Alty,’ answered Mr. Snow.

‘Of course I can live on two hundred a year.’

‘I am greatly afraid you will have to try.’

‘I can’t imagine why he left you nothing.’

‘I certainly thought he would have remembered me, more especially as I helped him to make large sums of money.’

‘You think it would be of no use disputing the will?’

‘Not the slightest.’

‘And you see it is only for my life.’

‘Yes, or else we might have made your income much larger.’

‘O, I have some money saved,’ confessed Miss Alty.

‘Much?’

‘Not much, but enough, I think, to make more of. Will you come one day and talk it over?’

‘Certainly.’

‘Only to think of those old men and women!’

‘Well, it was his own, and he had a right to do what he liked with it.’

‘But I can’t get the thought of you out of my mind.’

‘O, never mind me, Miss Alty; if I helped your brother to make money, his money helped me to my present position.’

‘It is very good and nice of you to say so.’

‘It is the truth,’ answered Mr. Snow.

‘Well, at any rate,’ said one of the nephews, who insisted on fastening himself to Mr. Snow, as that gentleman walked back to London, ‘you have got fifty pounds, and that is more than any one of us has.’

‘Yes, your uncle left me fifty,’ agreed Mr. Snow, feeling the admission bound him to nothing.

‘And as you are executor there will surely be a lot of pickings.’

Mr. Snow shrugged his shoulders in dissent; but at the time he was thinking, if there were not, he would know the reason why.

If Mr. Alty thought his will would produce a public sensation he was disappointed. The time has completely gone by when, save in the columns of a local paper, almshouses, Christmas dinners, and suchlike are regarded with the smallest interest.

His kindred anathematised his memory; after a very short time the old men and women came to consider the almshouses and the December feast as their due; the patients in the London Hospital thought no more of Jacob Alty than of anybody else. Miss Alty congratulated her foresight in having saved all she could while her brother lived; and Mr. Snow and his colleague joined together

to make as much as possible out of the 'pickings.'

For a time after the retirement of the senior partner, as many people continued to call Mr. Pousnett, it was remarked by several persons—Mr. Alty's executor amongst the number—that Robert McCullagh was a changed man. It seemed as though the weight of some incubus had been removed; as though for the first time since he called himself one of the firm he felt he was really a capable and responsible individual.

'The governor weighed us all down,' said Stanley Pousnett, in friendly explanation. 'He is so clever himself he believes everybody else is a fool, and shows his belief, which sometimes proves trying. He said he would soon come back to give us the benefit of his advice; but he has not done so yet—and, you see, we are still managing to push along.'

Once again in those days Robert tried to reestablish friendly relations with his father, and once again he was repulsed. Mr. McCullagh, plodding on in his own old way, would have none of him.

'Never more,' said Robert to his wife, 'will I hold out the right hand of fellowship; never. Any advance in the future must come from him.'

'Don't say that,' entreated his wife; 'you cannot tell what may happen.'

'I can tell that I do not mean to put myself in the way of being rudely rebuffed.'

'But yet he is your father, Robert.'

'Yes, and I am his son, Janey;' which answer silenced Janey, who had never told her husband that twice, having essayed to speak to him and so close the breach, Mr. McCullagh elected to pass her by as he might a stranger.

As years passed on, however people began again to make remarks in connection with Pousnetts': one, that Robert McCullagh was growing stout, as is curiously and unhappily the fashion of City men; and another, that he and Mr. Stanley Pousnett were getting to look as if the 'strain' on so great a business were even worse for them than it had proved for Mr. Pousnett.

With Mr. Stanley this was particularly noticeable. He was living now in the Portman-square house with his wife, the beautiful heiress who had excited such admiration on the occasion of that memorable party on New Year's night. He was constantly complaining of his head; and once when recommended by a friend to follow his father's example, and retire from business altogether, he said, in a tone which removed from his expression all suspicion of irreverence,

'I wish to God I could!'

Wisely the world began to whisper, 'Such gigantic concerns were too much for any one;' that, 'after all, capital did not mean everything;' that 'no organisation could prevent the work being tremendous for the principals.'

In confidence, Mr. Stanley Pousnett said to his wife, 'I'd rather carry a hod;' while Robert remarked gloomily to Janey, 'I wish I were a day labourer.'

When the same persons who had spoken to Mr. McCullagh concerning his son's improved looks and spirits commented upon the worn expression of Robert's face, the man who had made his money by such different means merely observed,

'Folk who must needs be grand have to pay for it.'

Robert's house in Brunswick-square, his wife's pretty dress, the apparel of his children, his 'car-

riage friends,' his servants, the flowers in the balcony, the long white curtains that shaded his windows, were all so many sins in the mind of a father who refused to speak to the prodigal, whose worst fault, perhaps, was that he reminded him of his dead wife.

He truly believed Robert inherited all his mother's faults; whereas the young man had only taken the most amiable traits from both parents, conjoined, indeed, with a fatal weakness of character which even Janey understood.

'My poordarling!' she thought—for Robert could be a hero to her nevermore for ever—'my poor, poor dear!'

O, how she loved him! Never perhaps before did any woman who so thoroughly comprehended the feebleness of a husband's nature love one so utterly.

And the love was mutual. Never did man so idolise a wife as Robert did Janey.

The years slipped by. When there is little to mark the passage of Time, it is marvellous to consider how noiseless and stealthy are its swift sure footsteps. With most persons trade was very good indeed; a time of plenty had come to England (alas, that no Joseph then lifted his voice to warn his countrymen of the mournful miserable time of dearth which has since followed!). People thought the sun of prosperity was going to shine on them for ever. Bankers were complaisant, wholesale houses accommodating, retail shops anxious only to open up a connection. Business, in a word, was, so everybody said, in the healthiest state imaginable; when one morning, in the late autumn of 1864, Alick, now grown to manhood, announced to Mr. McCullagh, on his return from a call on one of the large shipping houses, that a lady had been 'twice after

him,' and seemed put out to think she could not see him.

'She'll be back again after a bit,' finished Alick.

'What like was she?' asked Mr. McCullagh; 'didn't she leave any name?'

'She wouldn't leave her name, and I couldn't say just what she was in the face, as she had a thick veil on her.'

'I can't think what any lady can be wanting coming after me,' observed Mr. McCullagh thoughtfully. 'If it's any of those Sisters, mind, I won't see her, Alick. It's just dreadful the way females come into a man's office nowadays, and refuse to stir a step till they have got his money. I am sure there was one last week I'd like to have been obliged to get the police to. I met her in the hall, and she wouldn't go, till at last I gave her a shilling, and then she stood on the doorstep upbraiding me for my meanness.'

'This is no a Sister,' said Alick; 'she was a well-dressed woman, and a civil-spoken sort of body.'

It was not long, only a few minutes in fact, ere the stranger appeared once again in Mr. McCullagh's hall, begging so earnestly for a private interview, that, with many misgivings as to his wisdom in trusting himself alone with an importunate person of the other sex, she was duly escorted into Mr. McCullagh's own room, where he did not lose one second in asking her business.

'You do not remember me?' she began, raising her veil.

'I never set eyes on ye in all my life before,' he answered.

'O yes, you did,' she said. 'Once, when you first came to London.'

'Why, surely ye're no—'

'I am indeed; and the most wretched woman on earth,' and she burst into tears.

Mr. McCullagh made no comment on the position as thus broadly indicated. In a dumb sort of wonder he waited for what was to come next. Why, how long was it since he had seen her? He was then a raw lad from the country, and she a good-looking young widow, with her mourning fal-lals fresh about her; and his uncle only just laid in the grave, and her heart as cold as steel, for all he had been a kind husband and a true. And here she was after the long, long years that had come and gone, her hair gray, her face haggard, 'greetin' like a hurt child;' but Mr. McCullagh offered no sympathy.

'What the deil brought her to me?' he marvelled.

'I have come to you on a matter of life and death, Mr. McCullagh,' she said, as soon as she could speak audibly.

'That's serious,' observed her relative cautiously.

'You may be sure nothing which was not serious could have brought me here.'

'Weel, I'll confess I do feel a wee surprised. Won't ye be seated, mem?'

'No, thank you, I can't sit. What I came about is this. To-day there will be a bill presented at your bank.'

'Whose bill?' he asked.

'Yours; and, O Mr. McCullagh, what I've come here to entreat is that—'

'Stop a moment,' interrupted Mr. McCullagh. 'What ye say is an impossibility, for I never signed a bill in my life.'

'I know that.' She was now bold with desperation. 'Nevertheless, there will be one presented there to-day, and unless it is paid ruin and disgrace and misery will come upon us.'

'Do ye mean it's a forgery, woman?'

She stretched out her hands to him with a mute appeal, while her lips formed the word she could not speak.

'My conscience!' and Mr. McCullagh in his extremity took a few short steps backwards and forwards over the worn carpet.

Then somehow she managed to tell him all: how her son had done this thing, how they had moved heaven and earth to raise the money to meet the bill, how they had tried to get it returned without presentation, and how they failed. 'And now—now I've come to you as my last hope on earth;' and to Mr. McCullagh's horror she fell on her knees before him, and tried to clasp his knees.

'Get up—get up!' he cried, with more vehemence than politeness. 'What do ye kneel to me for? If ye had knelt oftener to your Maker, it's like this chastisement would never have fallen on ye. Get up out of that, do. I wouldn't for a five-pound note anybody came in and found ye.'

'I'll stay on my knees till you say you will help me in this extremity.'

'Well, then, I'll never say it. For any sake do get up on your feet. It's not seemly; a woman of your age ought to have more sense. Why, ye must be close on threescore year and ten if ye're a day.'

It might not be a courteous way of inducing the lady to assume an erect position, but it was effectual. Somehow she rose—it was not with Mr. McCullagh's help—and, standing before him with streaming eyes and hands working convulsively, she asked that gentleman to bring the case home to himself: what would he say if his own son were in a similar trouble?

'What would I say?' repeated Mr. McCullagh; 'not much, but

to the purpose. I'd say as he had sinned he must suffer.'

'O, you are cruel!' she exclaimed; 'and you would not lose one sixpence, and you would save us from such misery as I am afraid even to think of.'

'Your son ought to have thought of that before he took pen in hand to sign another man's name.'

'That's true enough; but still I entreat you to have mercy.'

'How can I have mercy when there's not a banker in London but knows I have never done such a thing as accept a bill in my life?'

'You need not say, though, that you have not signed this. If it was your own son you could not be hard as this, and what is mine might be your case; we none of us can tell what we may come to.'

'One of my own sons once told me a lie, or at least what I suppose ye would call prevaricated to me. He led me to believe a thing was true I found out was different, and I've never spoken to him since. So what's the use,' added Mr. McCullagh, with sudden fierceness, 'coming to me to pick your son out of the mire, when, for a small fault in comparison, I haven't let mine cross my threshold for eight long years?'

'My God!' she said, 'and he has a wife and family!'

'And my son has a wife and family,' retorted Mr. McCullagh, positively revelling in his Spartan-like fortitude.

'Ah, you prophesied I might some day meet you when I would rather not. I always heard you were a hard man, but I did not think you would prove harder than the nether millstone. As nothing will move you, I will go to the bank-manager. He may be flesh and blood.'

'If ye mean that he may

condone the forgery, he daren't,' answered Mr. McCullagh; 'it would be as much as his place is worth, and his liberty, too. It's just an awful poseetion for every one of us; when I mind me of your first husband, I wonder how he came to have such a son.'

'He was a good just man,' she sobbed.

'Ay, and a lot of respect ye showed to his memory, marrying again.'

'If he could speak he would ask you to have pity on his son.'

'And it's only because he is not here to speak is the one thing that makes me hesitate for a minute. He was a true man, none better, and it's a sore consideration to think of a son of his being trailed to gaol all because he hadn't a mother fit to bring him up in the way he should go.'

'It is too dreadful! If you won't lift your finger to help us out of our trouble I'll go to him this minute, and bid him fly the country while there's still time.'

'And what if I don't let ye leave this room? Bide a bit,' he added, as she rushed to the door, 'don't be in such a hurry;' and he pushed her aside while he turned the key in the lock, and coolly put it in his pocket. 'As I tell ye, I can't just make up my mind to refuse to help my uncle's son; but I must think it out. Sit down, can't ye? there's a chair.'

From that minute she knew he would so manage as to keep the affair quiet; but he had let her feel his iron hand, so that the terms on which he insisted caused no surprise.

The sinner was to go abroad; the business in the Minorities was to be handed over to Mr. McCullagh, who, on his side, said he would do all he could to save something out of the wreck.

'I conclude the trade's no worth

a groat,' he grumbled, 'or they'd never have sunk so low as this; but I'll not be opposed by my own kin, and I'll have no more paper accidents, thank ye. And so now, if ye'll please to dry your eyes, we'll go down together to see your son. Who wants me?' Mr. McCullagh broke off to say, as there came a smart tapping at the door. 'A note from the bank, is it?' he remarked, when, having given admittance to Alick, that young man placed an envelope in Mr. McCullagh's hands, and remarked the messenger was waiting.

'Tell him I know what he wants, and will be round in half an hour. Now, mem, if *you're* ready;' and, the lady drawing down her veil, Mr. McCullagh took his hat, and they walked out of the court together and into Basinghall-street, where the sun was shining brightly.

In the Minorities there proved no difficulty in dealing with the unfortunate owners of that opposition which was to have ruined the older business.

So far as Mr. McCullagh could glean, affairs had for many years been going surely and steadily to the dogs. No shift for raising money but had been adopted; the Bread-street-hill concern was theirs but in name. Another person really owned the whole of that, merely paying a small sum a year to the family of the founder.

'Folk that will be grand must pay the penalty,' again observed Mr. McCullagh sententiously. It was a favourite expression of his, and there was no one there in a position to contradict his statement.

Mr. Alfred Mostin had been called in as a possibly useful ally, certainly as a sympathetic friend. Alfred would not have forged a name himself, but he could feel

for a man who had; particularly when that man was so placed as to become a mark for the exercise of Mr. McCullagh's tongue.

Upon the whole, however, that gentleman, having decided to do a generous thing for 'the sake of one who was dead and gone,' let them all off much easier than they could have expected.

He was having everything his own way; he was about to stamp out the only opposition that had ever really given him anxiety; he was triumphant over the foolish senseless bit o' pride his uncle threw himself away on; he was able to remark, without any one feeling courageous enough to dispute the point, that birds of a feather flocked together; which was a sneer at Alfred Mostin that luckless individual thought very uncalled for.

Nevertheless, though Mr. McCullagh carried all before him for a space, Alfred Mostin's hour came at last. It was after matters had been arranged at the bank, and when the Scotchman came down to have another 'keek' at the books.

'There's one thing,' he said to his cousin, when, with a contemptuous snort, he closed the balance-sheet which showed so disastrous a result, 'I'd like weel if ye'd tell me. Who was Upperton & Co.? for Moorhall, I take it, was put forward by somebody in the background.'

'I can't inform you,' was the answer, 'for I never could get at that myself; but I think Mr. Mostin knows. Don't you?'

Thus directly appealed to, Alf replied shortly, 'O yes, I know; I have always known.'

'If ye mind, Ailfred,' observed Mr. McCullagh, 'I told ye my mind misgave me ye were telling me a lee.'

'Well, I was,' said Mr. Mostin.

'And what call had ye to do that, and me offering ye good money for the information?'

'I did not want to make mischief or cause bad blood. I am not so fond of tale-bearing as some of your family.'

'Have ye any objection to speak out now, or is it still a secret?'

'It can't do any harm to speak out, that I know of. It was Pousnett.'

'Pousnett! Ye're joking, man.'

'No, I am not. It was your dear friend the senior partner started Upperton to try and ruin your trade; and he'd have done it too, if he could have found anybody who understood the business.'

'Bless and save us!' ejaculated Mr. McCullagh.

'And send you more wit and me more money,' added Mr. Mos-
tin, as he lounged out of the office.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CRASH.

It was the heart of summer; down upon the City streets the sun poured fiercely. In such cool grots as the court where Mr. McCullagh resided the heat was not so intense; but it was great enough anywhere to cause men wildly minded and wickedly indifferent to money matters to plunge into various places where cooling drinks in the shape of champagne and claret cup, iced ginger-beer and gin, S. and B., and even the tankard of modest Bass were to be procured.

Sauntering easily up Nicholas-lane, which was far cooler than the wider thoroughfare he had left a moment before, Mr. Snow, dressed in a white waistcoat and wearing a very light pair of trousers, his feet encased in easy shoes, and a white hat pushed as far back as

possible off his forehead, chanced to meet a friend, with whom he stopped to exchange such remarks as the state of the thermometer and the general condition of the money market suggested. They decided it was very hot; two degrees hotter than it had been at some previous period of the world's history; further, they agreed things were flat; indeed, that there was so little doing, it would not be a bad time to choose for running out of town; then having abundant leisure, and the shade of the high houses over the narrow lane proving grateful after the blaze and glare of Cornhill and King William-street, they fell to making a comparative analysis of the merits and demerits of the various watering-places they could at the moment recall to mind. After that they had a chat about their respective gardens, but at last made a move as if to separate. It was then Mr. Snow, looking vaguely across the lane at nothing in particular, said, in an indifferent sort of way,

'By the bye, have you still got any shares in Pousnetts'?

'A few. Why, do you want any?'

'O no, I don't want any, thank you;' then, after an instant's pause, 'they are about as high now as they ever will be, I think.'

'You think so?'

'Yes, I do.'

'Well, good-bye; God bless you!'

It was remarkable how Mr. Snow knew, for full three months elapsed, and his friend was rather beginning to believe that gentleman's rare intuition had been for once at fault, and to regret having on so slight a hint sold his shares, when two anxious men ran down from London to Norman Castle to take counsel with Mr. Pousnett.

The senior partner had attained

to the dignity of gout, and was sitting with his leg in bandages on a rest, near a window which commanded a view of Norman's Bay and the new town the company 'formed for the purchase of,' &c., had evolved from the sands of the seashore.

'Well?' said Mr. Pousnett, extending a couple of fingers to each of his visitors, neither of whom, it must be admitted, did he seem particularly charmed to behold. 'Well?'

Mr. Stanley answered this interrogative remark only by a gloomy silence, and it therefore fell on Robert McCullagh to speak.

'We have come, sir, to consult you as to what is best to be done.'

Mr. Pousnett lifted his eyebrows in amazed surprise.

'There is only one thing to do, I apprehend,' he answered.

'And that is—'

'Stop!'

The gloom deepened in his son's face, and that gloom found an even darker reflection on Robert McCullagh's brow.

Mr. Pousnett continued with imperturbable calmness,

'It has been coming to this for a long time. I have for a considerable period foreseen that it would be necessary for you to avail yourselves of the first opportunity which offered for closing a concern you have proved yourselves perfectly incapable of managing. You have got that opportunity now—seize it.'

'What we came down to know,' said Robert, with more boldness than might have been expected from him, 'was whether you would not at this crisis step forward with a sufficient sum to enable us to tide over the present difficulty, and try whether we could not manage so to work the business as to keep it alive.'

'Quite impossible,' replied Mr. Pousnett.

'May I ask to which question you make that answer?' inquired his son; 'to our carrying on the business, or to your stepping forward with assistance?'

'To both,' declared the wise man, who had done so well for himself. 'And now, Stanley, once for all, understand I am not going to discuss or argue this matter with you. My health is not in a state to permit me to engage in controversy. I left you with a splendid going concern, a large capital, the prestige of an old and honoured name, and—'

'You left us, sir,' broke in Robert McCullagh, '*hopelessly insolvent.*'

Mr. Pousnett turned upon his former partner with a look of contemptuous displeasure.

'Ah, well,' he said, 'you had better tell that to your shareholders, and see how they will receive the intelligence.'

'They will have to be told the truth, I suppose,' persisted Robert doggedly.

'Then try the experiment. Of course I shall have to make my statement, and in your own interests I must remark it seems to me a pity the two should not be identical. I really am at a loss to know what has procured me the pleasure of this visit. Situated as you are, I cannot imagine why you did not remain in town and see your solicitor.'

'Father,' began Stanley Pousnett, 'it may be all very well to take this tone with the world, but why do you adopt it with us? We know now the thing has been done, and we know also we shall have to suffer. What is the use of talking as though we had brought misfortune on ourselves, when for years we have been fighting as two men, I suppose,

never fought before to save our shareholders from loss and our creditors from ruin!’

‘I have told you before, I am not going to argue this matter. By bitter experience, I know how incompetent you both are to deal with the simplest commercial difficulty. I left you with the ball at your feet; if you were unequal to the game, it is no fault of mine. Besides, I do not know of what you complain. You have lived in good style, Stanley; you have enjoyed every luxury a man could desire; your wife has a fine fortune settled on herself, which no indignant creditor can touch. And as for you, Mr. McCullagh,’ proceeded Mr. Pousnett, ‘you came to me with nothing, and if you leave the concern in the same destitute condition, you have but yourself to thank for it. Any man might have made his fortune out of the amount you have permitted to alip through your fingers. But even you have lived, and lived well, on the money of your shareholders.’

‘I would rather have lived on bread and water—’ Robert was beginning, when Mr. Pousnett interrupted him.

‘Pray spare me all that,’ he said, with a contemptuous smile. ‘Any such remarks had much better be addressed to the general public. I assure you it is perfect waste of time talking the matter over with me. Long ago I saw you would never be able to stand your ground. I knew this result was a mere question of time.’

‘Then, in a word, you will do nothing?’ said his son impatiently.

‘In a word, I am not going to throw good money after bad, if that is what you mean. Hereafter you will thank me for my firmness. And now I think you had better get back to town as

soon as possible. Will you have luncheon?’

They both said they could not eat anything; and then, being after a fashion turned civilly out of the house, they went down to the seashore, and walked about and sat on the shingle for a time, and talked miserably, and tried to reconcile themselves to the disgrace and the trouble they foresaw in store.

‘Your father led us into this mess, and he ought to have helped us out of it,’ said Robert McCullagh bitterly.

Stanley Pousnett did not speak in reply. He felt he could not say all he had in his mind about his father.

‘That India business must have been shaky all along,’ observed Robert drearily.

‘If we talk for ever we can’t mend matters, I’m afraid,’ said Stanley Pousnett; and then they did talk at length, as men do in such extremity, travelling the same ground over and over and over again.

In the afternoon they got a train which took them back to London from their fruitless journey, and the next day it was known that Pousnett & Co. (Limited) had sent out letters stating, owing to the stopping of their Madras Branch, they were obliged temporarily to suspend payment.

‘So that card castle has collapsed at last,’ remarked Mr. Snow.

‘And Bob is the only one of the lot who will save nothing out of the wreck,’ returned Alfred Mostin.

‘And I’ll be bound the whole fault will be laid at his door.’

‘Though the concern was hopelessly rotten eleven years ago.’

‘Yes, but how is anybody to prove that?’

‘Nobody can. The things which are most certain are those generally utterly impossible of proof.’

'Well, *I* made something out of Pousnetts,' muttered Mr. Snow, with some natural self-congratulation.

The news that Pousnetts' house had stopped was received almost with incredulity. To the very last confidence in the concern remained unshaken. On the day before the circular was issued their acceptances were duly met, their cheques duly honoured; no writs were out, or actions threatened, or executions pending. The whole affair seemed so entirely that of a vessel going down in a calm sea, without a breath of wind stirring or the slightest apparent reason for the calamity, that people generally believed it was only a temporary hitch which had occurred; they thought the leak which sprang so suddenly could surely be stopped, and that the ship bearing the fortunes of Pousnett (Limited) would still make many a good voyage.

It was rumoured Mr. Pousnett was expected in town immediately, and then people felt everything would be explained and put right. It seemed too monstrous to believe such an enormous concern should break to pieces in a moment, so large an amount of capital have been spent! At that period men's minds had not become habituated to the spectacle of huge businesses heeling over and going down head foremost in the summary fashion to which they since have grown accustomed. There might be, and no doubt was, some temporary difficulty; but if once the former senior partner brought his experience to bear on the difficulty, however it had arisen, things would soon be set in order. The solicitors made light of the matter; the statement before the commissioner was of the airiest and most agreeable description. There are gentlemen who under-

stand the importance of letting the public down easily, and though Mr. Pousnett did not appear in the transaction, there could be no doubt he was really stage-manager and wire-puller at this period of the affair.

After a time there was a talk—it never was anything but talk, yet it served to amuse the shareholders—of reconstructing the company and going on with it the same as ever, only with Mr. Pousnett as chief and Mr. Robert McCullagh nowhere. Tacitly it seemed agreed amongst the high contracting parties, except the scapegoat himself, that all the sins of all the persons connected with Pousnett & Co. (Limited), in the way of extravagance, folly, short-sightedness, bad management, lack of ordinary prudence, and an utter absence of economy, were to be laid on Robert, who, bearing this burden, was to be thrust out into the wilderness.

In vain he remonstrated, explained, argued, lamented—nobody believed a word he said; not a creditor but anathematised him, not a soul but marvelled how he could have had the presumption to imagine he could fill Pousnett's shoes. Stanley Pousnett took to his bed, not in emulation of his father's tactics, but because the long anxiety and the heavy ultimate blow had really been too much for him. As for Robert, though he felt ill enough and wretched enough, he still walked about the City. Somebody, it was quite clear, must remain to answer the questions, to which replies were daily required. The other directors simply brazened the matter out, or else took refuge in an inconceivable ignorance. By degrees the truth leaked out. Pousnetts' was going to be a very bad business indeed; there would be no reconstruction of the company, no

dividend, no anything except with the lawyers and the bankruptcy people, who would continue to realise and swallow. Nobody meant to refund a penny; those who had lost, seeing they were supposed to stand an equal chance of winning, must put up with the result.

The lease of the house in Portman-square belonged to Mr. Pousnett; but the new and costly furniture having been ordered and paid for by Mr. Stanley—who, in conjunction with Mr. Robert McCullagh, had *re* Pousnett & Co. (Limited) incurred various debts, for which they could and were held personally liable—was sold; the proceeds being kept by the lawyers for their own benefit.

'There won't be a bit of carrion left for anybody but the crows,' remarked Mr. Snow to Alf Mostin, who was the only man to whom he spoke freely about the Pousnett trouble.

'Trust the crows for leaving a bit of carrion for anybody else,' amended Mr. Mostin.

'They will make it a ten years' business,' observed Mr. Snow; and his words were within the mark, for Pousnetts' estate is not wound up yet. There is some trifle of money left, and while it remains the lawyers are too conscientious to write 'Finis' on the last page of the dreary record.

No description could convey any adequate idea of the effect produced on Mr. McCullagh by the crushing downfall of the great house with which it had once given him such pride to say his son was connected.

He was a man who felt debt a bitter dishonour, the slightest deflection from the straight path of fair trading a terrible disgrace; and the awful things which were revealed in the course of those bankruptcy proceedings, things which

made him fear to read his *Times* by reason of what he might chance to find there, would almost require another book to chronicle.

Every day something fresh came out about Pousnetts': some valuable asset discovered to be worth about the value of the paper that had made pompous mention of it; some firm tottering to bankruptcy whose bills had been taken by the company; some security found utterly unavailable.

It was with shame Mr. McCullagh read these 'explanations' and 'disclosures.' He did not like walking the City streets; he feared to meet his acquaintances. Pousnetts' was his last thought before he sought his bed, where sleep refused to descend and refresh him, and his first consideration when the morning sun 'glinted' in through the window-pane.

Very resolutely he refused to discuss the business with any one. He said 'he would prefer not speaking about it;' and he was so explicit and determined on this point people began to think that, spite of his experience, he had been, in City parlance, 'bitten to the bone.'

Only Mr. Snow was able to extract a word from him, and that of the briefest. In answer to an expression of pity for Robert, the Spartan father sternly answered, 'As he has sown he must reap.'

Mr. Snow shrugged his shoulders in reply, which action so irritated Mr. McCullagh that he burst out,

'I know well enough what ye're thinking of, but it makes matters no better. It is a mere matter of choice. If ye like to consider Robert as taken in, that means he's a fool; if ye would rather believe he was in the swim, that proves he's a rogue; and for

my own part I don't think there's a hair to choose between the two characters.'

Mr. Snow smiled incredulously. 'Except,' went on Mr. McCullagh, 'that I'd rather have to work with a rogue, because it would be my own fault if I let him take me in; but you never know how to deal with a fool.'

'I fancy I do,' was all Mr. Snow said; and there the conversation dropped, for Mr. McCullagh seemed quite indifferent whether he did or not.

After all it was on Robert the worst of the trouble fell. There is a great deal of truth in one of Mr. Pousnett's favourite axioms, namely, that a man with a full purse can bear reverses and even disgrace with much greater equanimity than he who has to face the world's scorn and anger without a halfpenny in his pocket. Robert had to face the Pousnett shareholders and general creditors, who looked upon him as a mere adventurer, in the character of an impecunious bankrupt.

He was totally ruined; when the company foundered nothing remained to him from the wreck except his liabilities and Mrs. Lillands' annuity. All the few possessions he owned in the world, simply represented by his house and its contents, were totally insufficient to satisfy the Pousnett creditors, who, represented by able lawyers, came down upon him like ravening wolves.

Perforce he, like Mr. Stanley Pousnett, had, following the example of the illustrious company, to go through the Court, but, differing from his employer's son, he had nothing to fall back on. His father's doors were shut against him. His wife had no settlement. He had to borrow money to pay the preliminary expenses. He was as destitute of

worldly wealth as the day his mother brought him into the world; and if he had gone on his knees and prayed any merchant in the City to give him employment, not a merchant but would have answered he could not possibly comply with the request. If it had not been for Janey he must have lost hope and courage; but in the poor lodgings whither they had retreated she made him as happy as a man so situated could be made, consoled him for the world's neglect, and tried to give him strength to bear the world's contumely.

What tried him most was the eternal questioning on the subject of Pousnetts'. Over and over again he was forced to repeat information which, to the best of his ability, he had given honestly once. Explanations had to be gone through many times. The days passed, and so did the months; and still the legal and official ardour remained undiminished, and still the ardour seemed likely to know no abatement.

'The best thing you can do,' advised Mr. Snow, 'is to go to America and see if any opening presents itself. It is forty weeks now since the concern smashed, and during the whole of that time these people have kept you at their beck and call. If you had any business you could not attend to it; and till some bigger failure takes the public mind off Pousnetts', you will get no business here. You have told everything there is to tell; and should you be wanted back again, why, you can come. I'll find the funds. I have talked the matter over with your wife, and she is willing—indeed, wishful—for you to go.'

It was literally the truth. Janey saw the misery and uncertainty of their position was eating her husband's heart out.

'I can't leave mamma,' she said, when he spoke to her on the subject. 'I will stay at home and take care of her and the children, and you shall go away for a little and make our fortunes.'

She tried to look bright and cheerful at the picture herself had conjured up; but the attempt proved somewhat of a failure.

'If I can make even a little you will come to me?' he asked.

'Ah, dear, don't let us talk of that!' she entreated. She knew before she could join him her mother must die; she would never be able to take such a journey, till the poor old lady, who was already sorely missing the comforts with which it had been her daughter's delight to surround her, was dead.

Love and money had kept her alive so long; but it was very certain that, now the money seemed likely to run short, love could do very, very little. Not that so far they had encroached on Mrs. Lilands' annuity for their own wants. Janey's jewelry, her personal possessions, the old lace, the rare shawls, the things which her mother had kept hoarded away, were each in turn produced and disposed of, so that Mrs. Lilands might feel no stint; that the wine, the medicine, the generous diet, the constant attention, should know no change. Nevertheless her daughter already saw a change in the vacant face; and she was aware, without a miracle being wrought, she could not continue to provide for the invalid as she had done.

Robert started from Liverpool; and when the husband and wife parted at Euston-square, it was on each side apparently with a brave face and a stout heart. Yet the man could not see the landscape clearly for many a mile after the train passed Harrow; and Janey, with veil drawn down and

head bent, actually brushed up against Mr. McCullagh without perceiving him on her way home.

To that gentleman his son's 'flight,' as he mentally termed the wise and necessary step Mr. Snow had advised, seemed the last drop in a cup of iniquity already filled to the brim.

'He ought not to have run away across the Atlantic as if he'd committed some crime punishable at the law,' he decided. 'Why, even his namesake went no further nor Holland, after I let him off far too easy; and he's doing well there, I'm told. No wonder Robert's wife was ashamed to look me in the face, and made believe she didn't see the father whose honest pride her husband has brought so low.'

If Janey had seen the father thus pathetically referred to, she would not, in her altered circumstances, have attempted to speak to him; but, as has been said, her want of perception was no affectation. Blinded with tears, sad at heart, crushed in spirit, she made her way back to the humble home, which now seemed so desolate, utterly unconscious of having passed friend or enemy by in silence.

When Mr. Snow spoke of some 'bigger failure than Pousnetts' as likely to occur, which should direct public attention from the collapse of that venture, he had no special house in his mind's eye that he considered 'shaky.' His utterance was only made in a general spirit of prophecy. Ere long, somebody or something was sure to 'go,' and cause even a greater sensation than the crash he had foreseen to be inevitable from the first morning Robert McCullagh told him of the various changes contemplated by the senior partner and his coadjutors.

As regarded what really came

to pass during the course of the summer, when Robert, following his advice, left the lawyers and trustees in bankruptcy to swell their costs as well as they could without his assistance, Mr. Snow had as little prevision as those who paid in or remitted the day before the storm broke.

It fell on London like a thunder-clap. News that the Corner House had suspended was flashed through the three kingdoms, across the Channel to France, under the ocean to America. Everywhere the telegraph went, people heard of the monetary crisis which had come; of the terror and panic in London that had seized all classes, resembling nothing that had ever before occurred in the City, except the bursting of the South Sea Bubble in Threadneedle-street.

That was a time to try the stoutest heart. How many were ruined by and how many died of the shock, will never be even approximately known. In the memory of the oldest inhabitant, the Dragon and the Grasshopper hoisted high aloft the Lord Mayor's realm had never looked calmly down on such a scene, had never listened to such a clamour.

Amongst the ruins of mighty firms, fair reputations, old-established banks, the estates of country gentlemen, the shops of struggling tradesmen, one man stood serene. It was the once Senior Partner. He lost nothing; he had not a penny invested in anything the failure of the Corner House touched. Looking from afar upon the wreck of falling houses, which seemed to darken the air of the metropolis, he actually smiled as he murmured to himself,

'Ah, the good people in the City will now have something else to think about than Pousnett & Co. (Limited).'

This was a view of the catastrophe which did not present itself to Mr. McCullagh. He was one of those City people who just then had something else to do than think of Pousnett & Co. (Limited) in bankruptcy. Afterwards he felt himself 'free to confess'—indeed, he was rather free of confessing—that what he went through at that time put a few wrinkles on his face.

'Why, ye couldn't tell,' he said, 'ye didn't know what might happen from hour to hour, or even minute to minute. Folk were afraid of their shadow. Some of the managers never left their banks all night; but stayed on the premises with the wisest of the directors, consulting what had best be done in the position in which they found themselves. Every morning's post brought news of some great house gone in the country; the like of it was never seen in our time. I don't mind saying now there were a couple of big firms I propped up myself through the worst of it. But for me they must have gone. Why, even the heads of my own bank took fright, and if I had not advised them to hold on, I do believe they'd have closed their doors. It just blew through the City like a whirlwind, taking first this one and then that off his feet, and dashing him to pieces. It was something to see; it is something to say a man has passed through; but, my faith, I wouldn't be the one to be out in such a storm again for all the money I saved myself and other people by working night and day while the worst of it lasted. And what it would have been, and who it would have left standing, if a lot of the London merchants, me amongst the number, hadn't fought the violence of the tempest shoulder to shoulder, the Lord

alone knows ; I'm very sure none of His creatures will ever be able to give a guess.'

Eventually Mr. McCullagh emerged from the dust and rubbish of the business edifices which had fallen all around him, untouched in purse, unscathed in person save by those wrinkles before referred to.

'I wouldn't say I'm the poorer by a halfpenny,' he observed to Captain Crawford, with whom he was having a final settlement of accounts, in view of that gentleman's marriage to a 'well-tochered Scotch lass.'

He who, Marius-like, had contemplated the ruins of dynasties greater than his own, might have echoed this remark ; but he could not add that he had escaped untarnished in reputation. Not then, but a few months later, the Norman's Bay Company, after struggling madly to keep afloat a little longer, had to inform the public that it also was hopelessly insolvent. Not Pousnett & Co. (Limited), not Alfred Mostin in his worst Whitecross-street experiences, could have shown a longer list of liabilities and a more striking deficiency of assets than the Norman's Bay directors were able to display to an astounded world.

In this case there was no Robert McCullagh, no imbecile junior partner endowed with few brains, uplifted with a too sudden success, 'intoxicated by the position to which Mr. Pousnett's fatal kindness had raised him,' to act as scapegoat ; no Stanley Pousnett, 'rash and extravagant,' to join the scapegoat in the blame of having dissipated the 'splendid capital the senior partner's exertions had placed at the disposal of the company.' No, indeed ; on the contrary, there were some very sharp rogues on the direction : a secretary who had understood all along

the whole enterprise was what he called a 'flam ;' accountants who stated that 'when they wanted to know' they were told to mind their own business ; while various adventurers cropped up in the course of the investigation which ensued who seemed to have got into the train of Mr. Pousnett's last venture, as camp-followers hang about the rear of an invading army.

All these people, and many others, when the time came to speak, had small scruple about opening their mouths. They told everything they had to tell, and it turned out they knew a great deal more than Mr. Pousnett imagined. Some of them were at the trouble to rake up the Pousnett (Limited) affair, which, it now began to be whispered, had likewise been a complete swindle.

One man, indeed, went so far as to say Pousnetts', for many a day before the company was floated, had been kept up on accommodation paper, and that he could prove it ; but he never appeared able to do so, though he managed to retire from London with a nice little independence, which some people said was paid to him quarterly by a gentleman who had good reasons for such generosity.

There was a great scandal and a great hubbub for a little time. Actions were threatened, shareholders cursed the name of Pousnett, respectable people in the City shook their heads when the senior partner was mentioned ; but it all blew over. A great deal of foreclosing went on for a time about Norman's Bay ; but nothing happened to the Pousnett property either there or elsewhere. Mr. Pousnett went abroad for three months ; and when he returned, everybody who was anybody called upon and asked him to dinner, and accepted his invitations in return.

It could not be denied, however, that after this second collapse of a company formed under Mr. Pousnett's auspices, and apparently solely for his benefit, a reaction in favour of Robert McCullagh took place.

People began to say he had not been so much to blame, after all ; that no doubt Mr. Pousnett had kept him well under his thumb ; that most likely he was merely the cat's-paw used by Mr. Pousnett for getting his chestnuts out of the fire ; that, upon the whole, the man had been hardly dealt by ; that the Pousnetts, who were all of them now living on the fat of

the land, had ruined his prospects and beggared him into the bargain. 'There is he, poor wretch, in America almost starving, I hear ; while his wife and children are just able to keep soul and body together, in a mean lodging near the Lower-road, upon the mother-in-law's annuity,' said one man.

'Well, they could not expect to eat their cake and have it,' answered the friend to whom this observation was made.

'Faith, I think it was Pousnett who ate up everybody's cake, and is now comfortably feeding on his own.'

(To be continued.)

A ROARING GAME.

'WEEK, then, I'll send a cart, and Robert here'll send anither at ten o'clock, and that'll tak' a' the stanes.'

Thus the factor, as the land steward is called in Scotland.

We, that is, the members of the Rathkier Curling Club, are standing at the door of the curling house, arranging for a great match to be played on Monday, this being Saturday.

Mr. Stooks, the factor, and most worthy representative of the Laird of Rathkier, having delivered himself of the above sentence, recommends the members present to put their stones ready for the cart. Andrew, the keeper of the house, or 'officer,' as this slave of rink is denominated, is in great request: 'Put my stones down—mind my besom,' being the general injunction.

At last, after a good deal of consulting and arranging for absent as well as present, twenty-four pairs of stones are made ready with two dozen brooms, or besoms, to match; and the members retire to their respective abodes, it first being settled that several absent players are to be reminded the next day of this important match; Mr. Stooks undertaking to warn the 'meenister.' The 'Sawbath' intervening, and while the various curlers are dreaming, talking, and thinking of nothing else but curling, we may tell the uninitiated some of the mysteries of the game.

Curling is supposed to have been imported from Holland, as many of the expressions used in the game are of undoubted Low

Country derivation. The manner of playing the game is as follows: At a distance of thirty-eight yards from each other are fixed the tees, or points to be played at. A piece of wood having a nail in it seven feet from the end is moved round, with the said tee as a centre, thus describing a circle seven feet in radius. At a distance of seven feet from the circle is placed the hog score, a line drawn at right angles to the line of play. The space from tee to tee on which the stones travel is called the rink. The same lines and circles are drawn at both ends of the rink. At a distance of about a yard beyond the circle a piece of iron is placed on the ice, so as to allow a firm stand to be taken in delivering the stone. The players have each two stones, and play alternately, eight in each rink, four against four. The stones are circular, flat on top and bottom, and highly polished, having a handle on the top to grasp. They weigh from thirty to forty pounds, and are called Ailsa Craigs or Crawford Johns, from the two principal rocks from which they are made. The object of the game is to throw, or rather slide, the stone along the ice from one circle to the other, the stone nearest the centre or tee being the winner. The two last players, one from each side, station themselves at the circle played for, to direct the players on their respective sides. These important functionaries are called skips, from the Dutch, being the same word as skipper. If a stone is played so as to lie on or near the tee, the

skip on the other side will direct his player to remove it. Failing in this the next player, to whose side the winning stone is of course favourable, will desire his man to 'lay a guard;' that is, so to play his stone as to leave it in a direct line with the winner, and therefore protect it from his adversaries. Another way of removing a guarded stone, or of getting near the tee, is to play at a stone which may be lying a short distance from the circle. By striking it on the inside edge the played stone will go to the tee; by striking it on the outside the lying stone will be driven to the tee. This is called in wick, or out wick, as the case may be. The line, or hog score before mentioned, is the abhorrence of beginners, as all stones not over it must be removed; and though it may appear easy to stand on a piece of iron and slide a stone as far as the hog, yet, until the knack has been acquired, tyros often have their futile efforts met with the contemptuous remark, 'That's a hog, tak' him by handle and pet him off.' Curlers play alternately, as in bowls, first one on one side, then an opponent, followed by the leader's second stone, then the other player's remaining stone. The next pair follow, then the third pair, the skips playing last, their respective third players directing them. The art of skipping is of no mean order, it being a matter of great judgment to know when to guard, when to promote a favourable stone; to fill up or block the way to the tee, and all the other niceties of the game. A careless skip may, by trying some foolish experiment, dishearten his followers, and thus lose many an end, as it is called each time the players cross from one end to another. While each pair is play-

ing, the remaining players range themselves on each side of the rink, so as to sweep any obstruction off the ice, and thus help a lazy stone over the hog score or even up to the very tee. The sweeping, which must be seen, to at all convey to a novice any idea of the wonderful effect produced, is done under the direction of the skips. Each party only sweeps its own stones; but after a stone has reached the tee, the opposing skip may use all his endeavours to smooth its path beyond, and perchance get it clear of the circle, and thus put it beyond any danger of counting adversely, which it might do if left in the ring, no stone on the other side remaining nearer the tee. It can hardly be believed what an amount of excitement is aroused at a curling contest or bonspiel. That wonderful compendium of the Scottish language, *Jamieson's Dictionary*, says this word is derived from the Flemish, *bowne*, a village, and *spiel*, play, thus meaning a match between villages. The same work says, the hog score, which any beginner will make early acquaintance with, is so called from the laziness of the porcine animal. To describe any game is not a very easy task; and to thoroughly understand the Scottish national game, it must be seen; and when seen there is no doubt the new-comer will soon take as violent a predilection as many a one before him. It is certainly a peculiar circumstance that the two national games of Scotland—golf and curling—should be of such a levelling nature. If a communistic individual will pay a visit to any of the golfing greens, or, to keep more to the subject of this sketch, to Lindores or Carsebreck, he would there see such a gathering as would entirely be in accordance with his senti-

ments and opinions. Peer and peasant, laird and farmer, Episcopalian parson and Established Kirk 'meenister,' all collected together and contending in eager though friendly rivalry. There may be seen a Duke, the holder of one of Scotland's oldest titles, once 'The King of Man,' here is the heir to a peerage granted for legal eminence; while playing in the same rink will probably be the blacksmith or the gamekeeper. The Caledonian Curling Society is the recognised authority on all curling matters, and every club of any importance in Scotland is in connection with it, as well as several in England, Canada, and the Colonies. Almost every club has its own medal or prizes to play for; besides, the Caledonian Society gives medals to be played for between clubs of the same district. The game has not spread very much in England, and it may, perhaps, be a pity it has not, as certainly no game produces more good feeling between landlord and tenant, between employer and *employé*. Still, clubs have been established at Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, the Crystal Palace, and at Wimbledon (London Scottish). As golf has of late years so spread, perhaps in future time curling may follow.

Monday morning breaks, cold but bright, with a strong sun. All the curlers betake themselves, some on foot, some in traps, to the neighbouring loch of Spate, where the curlers of Rathkier are to meet in contest with the merry men of Spate, at whose head will be their young laird, a Guardsman come down from London for this great annual match. The battle between Sayers and Heenan could not have been looked forward to with more interest than this between the members of the two neighbouring clubs. On

reaching the loch-side, the Laird of Rathkier and his son, a tall young cavalry soldier, are greeted by all those assembled by doffed bonnets. By the hearty greetings given and returned, it is easy to see in what respect a good landlord is held. To reside on his own property and identify himself with his tenants has always been his chief delight, and certainly no man could be more popular and more deservedly beloved than the Laird of Rathkier. At last all the players are gathered together. Let us look round. All dressed in the same uniform of brown homespun cloth, large flat brown bonnet to match, with a blue tassel on the top, and the badge of the club in silver on the side. Here is a lawyer, there two 'meenisters,' a manufacturer or two, and farmers, with a few tradesmen, complete the list. Skips are chosen, and the six great men retire into a corner to complete their respective lists. No Cabinet Council ever deliberated over an Eastern Question with greater solemnity. At last their choice is made, the respective members of each rink are agreed on, and then all adjourn to the ice. We will follow the Laird and his three adherents, consisting of his son, Mr. Stooks, aforementioned, and Mr. Grossart, the Rathkiergardener. Stooks being a cautious player is to play first; Mr. Grossart is to follow him, while the young laird, being a deadly hand at removing a winner, precedes his father, who is skip on this rink. Opposed to these four worthies are the young proprietor of Spate, a brother officer, and two farmers, the skip being a new man from the west country, with a great reputation as 'a fearsome player, yon Foster.'

The game begins.

'Now, Stooks, a canny draw to the tee,' says Rathkier.

Stooks, a little shaky, for he is a very anxious player, plays his stone rather weak.

'Sweep, sweep!' shouts the skip.

In obedience his satellites help the stone nearly half-way between the tee and the hog score.

'A little weak, but all in the way of promotion,' is the verdict.

The other side play cautiously past the obstructing stone close up to the centre of the ring.

'Now, Stooks, what do you see of that?'

'Nearly the whole of it,' returns Stooks.

'Then take it.'

Which he does, with such effect that the offending stone is struck fair out of the ring, and Stooks' missile, spinning slightly round, lies completely guarded.

'Well played! That's all the curl!' shouts the delighted Laird.

Stooks' stone is never displaced, and another being drawn quietly past the guard, gives Rathkier two on the first end. The game goes on with little variation on all six rinks until two o'clock, when a quarter of an hour's rest is called, for pies, hot beer, and the never-failing nip of whisky. During this repast the players clearly demonstrate to each other how their rink must have been ahead but for the most unheard-of misfortunes. The pies consumed, washed down by the above-mentioned beverages, the play is resumed. Let us look at this rink; the skip here is a privileged wag. To Mr. Baps, the baker, who plays a stone that wobbles about all over the rink, the only contemptuous remark is,

'Jeames, ye played that like a soda-scone.'

Again there is a fine open shot, which one of his players attempt-

ing twice, and neither time succeeding, is only met with a heart-broken sigh, and 'Missed, missed!' in faltering accents to the bystanders.

The ladies from the 'Hoose' come down and look on at their father's play for a little, though there is a good deal of contempt mingled with their observation. The mysteries of outside edge and threes are more in their way, and they shortly depart, remarking,

'Couldn't stand that rubbishing game long; let us try loop.'

Which they promptly do, with the result that, on our arrival home, one of the fair trio informs us she has fallen thirteen times. Still the Laird's rink is having 'a sair fecht';* all even. As we come up, Grossart is receiving elaborate instructions how to remove an opposing stone. With great care he plays; but, much to the Laird's discomfiture, misses it. A guard is then demanded from the other side; but it is not quite successful. And Grossart, on being appealed to, declares he still sees half the objectionable stone. No curler ever admits he sees the whole of a stone if there is any chance of being asked to remove it. Alas, though Grossart plays slowly and deliberately, his stone flies past without any effect. This is too much for the Laird. With a withering look he shouts out,

'O Grossart, man, it is a good thing there will be no ice where you are going!'

This reference to the future state of Mr. Grossart is received in silence, as he is thought, no doubt, richly to have deserved even worse remarks. Four o'clock at last comes; the game finishes; the score is cast, and Rathkier wins on three rinks by 3, 5, and 12, and loses on two by 6 and 7, therefore winning a hard fight by

* Fight.

7 points, or shots, as they are called. On our way to the curling house we hear the wag before referred to remarking to one of his friends, with a smack on the back,

‘John, man, you’ll hae a treacle piece when we get hame for that last shot.’

The stones are put on the cart, and after nips round and three hearty cheers for the Lairds, and one more for the young ladies, the combatants retire to their respec-

tive homes. The best thing any one can do, in my opinion, is to learn to curl; therefore go to Rathkier, put yourself under Mr. Stooks’ guidance, and if he does not make you a player, no one will. In many years to come, with the Laird and Mr. Stooks, and sustained by their celebrated mixture of ginger-wine and whiskey, I hope to put my feet on the crampit, fix my eye on the tee, and play ‘the Roaring Game.’

A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE.

SWEET eyes, that hold a world of dreams,
Within your sombre gaze,
Deep, dark, and still as mountain streams
In hidden mountain ways,—
Look up to where the winter stars
Their New Year's vigil hold,
And read this message that I send
Of love so long untold.

A year—just one short year ago—
I saw you stand alone
Within the wav'ring dusk and glow
By winter firelight thrown ;
And all my heart went out to you,
And all my life has known
Of joys or pain, or bliss or woe,
Since then has been your own.

A year ago—ah, sweet, that year !
How much it tells to me !
But now my heart throbs fast with fear,
Lest hope unanswered be ;
And ere the old year dies away,
I think of all it brought,
And how with you it seemed to stay
And fill my every thought.

I may not see your eyes to-night,
Nor hear your tender voice,
Nor watch the shadows pass to light,
If love be but your choice ;
For love, indeed, is all I bring—
A heart that beats for you,
And will so beat while life shall last,
And love in life be true.

So ere the year's last hour is gone,
I send my message, sweet,
And lay this love and longing down
Before your gentle feet ;
And when the stars are in the sky,
And glad bells chime anew,
O, take my message with their own,
And take—its sender too !

RITA.





"TWAS NOT SO LONG AGO!"

See p. 104.

LONDON SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY 1882.

LADY BEAUTY; OR, CHARMING TO HER LATEST DAY.

Book the Second.

LADY BEAUTY'S SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE TALE IS TOLD OF A LADY WHO WON A LOVER IN AUSTRALIA, WHILE SHE HERSELF NEVER CROSSED A MILE OF SEA.



See p. 127.

He answered that I might be satisfied that his story was a truthful one. How he came to know it so fully I need not inquire. **The** sadness with which this was said set me thinking; but for **that time** I understood no more.]

Little Mr. Brent returned home that day heartily and tho-
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roughly ashamed of himself. His bitterest enemy could not have wished him a more humbling fall. Being a great man for letter-writing, and firmly impressed with the fatal belief that the larger number of human complications can be adjusted by correspondence, he sat down after his dinner to write an explanation and apology to Mrs. Temple. The number of sheets he tore up, the enormous variety of openings which he adopted and cast aside at the fifth line, the sheets beginning, 'Dear Madam;' then, 'My dear Madam;' then, 'Dear Mrs. Temple;' then, 'My dear Mrs. Temple;' falling subsequently into, 'Mr. Brent ventures to present his respectful compliments;' and besides these the 'I am overwhelmed with confusion;' 'It is, I assure you, with the most poignant sensations of sorrow;' 'What can I say?' 'What can I urge in extenuation of my behaviour?'—so many of these were begun, cast aside, and torn up very small lest any one should find out what he had been doing, that as the night wore on the Rector gradually began to look like a man who is being snowed up. When, at twenty-five minutes past four A.M., after nearly nine hours of unintermitting head-work, the apology was finished, there was not left enough clean stationery in the house for a washing-bill; but in place of it there were fragments of paper lying on the floor sufficient for the manufacture of six full-sized paper pillows. With aching head, yet a little consoled withal, the Rector stumbled up-stairs to his weary pillow.

If he used a thousand sheets for his letter, it may be safely computed that one thousand and one was all that was required for the entire correspondence. Small was the paper and few the lines of Mrs. Barbara Temple's answer.

'Dear Mr. Brent'—thus it ran—'I have received your letter of apology, and I cannot say that it is at all more than the occasion required. At the same time, as you are sensible of the impropriety of your behaviour, I hope you will now forget it, as I shall. One stipulation only I make. The subject of marriage—or, indeed, any allusion to what passed between us yesterday—must never be made. On these terms you are free to resume your intercourse with my daughters and myself.—Truly yours,

BARBARA TEMPLE.'

'A very handsome letter,' Mr. Brent said. 'I shall take her at her word;' and after lunch he drove over to the house with a splendid present of fruit and flowers, and being received in the usual friendly way by mother and daughters, and his character being a slight one, not permanently impressible, he half forgot the misery of his exit from the place yesterday. Only when he first spoke to Mrs. Temple there was a trepidation in

his voice and manner ; but she was so obviously determined to keep her promise that he gradually grew composed. Once only his courage quite failed him. Caroline, the student, was reading history, and with that slight affectation of intellectual pursuits, from which not even her mother's lectures could guard her, she tried to call the Rector's attention to her lofty employment. The question she asked him was an unfortunate one. She was an ardent Liberal, and inquired in a pause in the conversation if he did not think that great good had arisen from the French Revolution. The Rector was so confounded by this inapposite interrogation that he nearly tumbled off his chair.

The next day his thoughts were driven into another channel. At breakfast he got a letter from his son announcing his arrival in London, and saying that he would be in Kettlewell at half-past four that afternoon. Amidst the vexation of the last two days, this was a prospect full of relief ; and the young fellow was received with more than a paternal welcome. Before dinner was over, between the influence of meat and wine and the society of his son, all acting on a trivial nature, easily moved, the Rector was quite comforted. Now he could have faced Mrs. Barbara Temple with a jest and a look of pleasantry. At least, so he fancied.

Brent junior was a good-looking young fellow of three-and-twenty, with a frank simple manner well-suited to his years. Mentally he was much superior to his father, and every sentence showed it ; but he behaved with a filial deference which was pleasant to see. All through the dinner there was a touch of preoccupation and even sadness about him, and upon this his father remarked as soon as they were alone.

'I hope you have not left any one behind ?' the father asked humorously.

'No,' the son answered, with a blush and a laugh. 'You don't think me quite a simpleton in this matter, do you ?'

'Well, Percy, you are young,' the sage father replied. 'At my time of life if a man fell in love with a picture, I think he would be a bit of an ass. But then I am forty-nine. I have age, and experience, and knowledge of the world.'

'You are very kind to take it in that way,' the son answered. 'I really don't want to be laughed at.'

'Is this wonderful picture in your possession ?' Brent senior inquired next.

'Yes,' the young fellow answered eagerly ; and he was darting up-stairs to fetch it, when, pausing on his way, he said, 'I had better tell you the story of it first.'

He made no bad picture himself leaning carelessly against the sideboard, his face and eyes kindling as he spoke with the

delight of the subject. Little Mr. Brent regarded him with no small pride; and the young fellow, with a light bashfulness which made the little narrative the more interesting, told his story.

'I met an artist out there, and he and I became great friends. He fell ill, and I nursed him; and when he was getting better, one day, to pass the time, he asked me to look over his portfolio. There was a great deal in it for which I cared nothing; but just at the end he drew out a little sketch of a girl—head and shoulders—with a border of simple white dress, and, as I thought, the loveliest face I ever saw. I was quite dumb as I looked at it, and there and then, father, I fell in love; and I declare to you I felt that even if this woman were only a painter's ideal, still, so had she captivated me, that I could never give my heart to any living woman. The memory of this picture would possess me, and would hang, as it were, above the living face, and rebuke its imperfections. You are not laughing?'

'I am forty-nine, Percy,' the father said, with the calmness of wisdom. 'You are twenty-four.'

'Well, I shall not trouble you with a long story,' the young fellow continued. 'Luckily for me, my friend was lying on a couch, and did not perceive my agitation, or he might have laughed me out of the dream. I found the sketch represented a real living girl—a real living girl, father!—unmarried, English, and, best of all, living not far from here. I asked for the picture, which he gave me readily. Curiously enough, he did not seem to see in it the superlative beauty which I saw. O, how I hung over that picture! How I idolised it! It was near me night and day, and at every glance my love for the original increased. Father, that is the woman I shall marry, if I ever marry at all!'

'You must see what her character is, Percy,' the father said. 'And we must make a few inquiries about family—and property.'

'Her origin must be refined!' the lover cried. 'Her character could be nothing but the noblest! As for property—property!—give me that girl, and I shall work hard enough to earn a world!'

So saying, he ran up-stairs; and in a moment returned, bearing the precious picture wrapped up in folds of silver paper. With trembling haste, but with more than womanly care, he put back one smooth sheet after another until the cardboard lay on the table face down; then drawing a long breath, he turned the picture up before his father.

'There,' he murmured, 'let her plead her own cause.'

At the same instant his father uttered an exclamation of surprise.

'Why, Percy,' he said, 'this girl is a friend of mine.'

‘A friend!’ the lover cried rapturously.

‘An old friend,’ the Rector answered. ‘Her mother is—ahem!—an old friend of mine—a very old friend, I may say. We are quite on intimate terms. The name of this young lady is Miss Sophia Temple!’

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH THE HERO AND HEROINE OF THIS LITTLE NOVEL ARE BROUGHT
FACE TO FACE.

AND so it was. Young Brent had fallen in love with the daughter of the woman who had just rejected his father so angrily. Mr. Brent thought at first that this alone would make an end of the thing; Mrs. Barbara Temple would not give her consent, so reasoned this parson, who knew the world so well. He kept silence on the point, however, and soon his son’s ardour, carrying everything before it, made his small doubts and scruples of no effect at all.

‘This picture is good—very good,’ the father said, gazing at it; ‘but I must tell you that it does not do the girl justice. Where it fails I cannot say; indeed, I can scarcely say what it is that makes Sophia Temple so handsome.’

Of course the son listened to all this with greedy ears; and the conversation turned into a discussion of the prospects of the affair which for the present the father would not admit to be hopeful, still remembering his own late repulse. When, however, young Brent ascertained that his father was on visiting terms with the family, he would hear no more of doubt or difficulty. With such an opening the fault must be his if he did not make the girl his own.

‘You are sure she is not engaged?’ he asked.

‘O yes, quite sure,’ the Rector answered. ‘None of the girls are engaged; indeed, the only one of the family who has been talked about in that respect is the—’

Mr. Brent stopped, and turned as red as a turkey-cock. He never did guard his lips well, and this disclosure came out before he remembered how awkward the subject might be. So he repeated the sentence stammeringly.

‘The only one of the family that was talked about in that respect was—’

‘You don’t mean her mother,’ cried the young fellow. He was quite interested in his beauty’s mother, and was ready to be interested in her grandmother if necessary.

‘Yes, the mother was talked about,’ the Rector said, still red with self-consciousness; ‘but there was nothing in it, Percy—nothing.’

'Is the mother handsome?' asked our lover vivaciously.

'Decidedly handsome,' the father replied.

'About what age?'

'Her age, Percy,' the Rector replied gloomily, 'has not been ascertained.'

Young Brent was a man of scientific tastes, and it was to his credit that, born as he was to great expectations, he steadfastly pursued his studies, in which he was now no contemptible authority. Geology was his favourite, and he was resolved to devote his energies to that science, for he was old-fashioned enough to believe that birth to good fortune imposes obligations on the inheritor. Young Brent resolved to make his mark in the world. Like all young enthusiasts, he must be for ever talking over his subjects, and he would try to interest his father in geology; but Brent senior had no patience with the insatiable demands of that science for time. 'In the name of goodness,' he would say, 'is not six thousand years enough for you? Just think what could be done in six thousand years! Up to that time you can do as you please, but I do object to your upsetting everything on the plea of wanting time to account for a dead fish being found in one of your strata. Is it any great matter how it came there, or when? To be upsetting Bishop Usher simply because somebody has found a few bones in a rock where he did not expect it seems to me the most monstrous thing I ever heard of.'

For all that, when the easy-humoured Rector heard his son praised in company for his scientific attainments, he was not ill-pleased; and contrasting his earnest and energetic youth with the idleness and frivolity of other young fellows in the town, he was willing to excuse the mild scepticism which contented itself with requiring a little chronological elasticity from Bishop Usher. Indeed, the Rector might fairly be proud of his son; intellectual ardour is seldom exclusive, and the young man's love of science gave him sympathy with much beside which was not directly scientific. He took an interest in politics, but with Radical symptoms, which his father pounced upon with vigilance and great heat, ending the dispute generally with a laugh, and the hope that things would last his time. Besides this, young Brent was a good musician, and not without literary tastes, for he dabbled in poetry. But partly through studious shyness, and more from a certain physical awkwardness, he was not altogether a drawing-room man. He had too great respect for women to be altogether a favourite with them; for these exalted beings, knowing their celestial qualities, cannot see why they should be approached with downcast eyes or addressed with faltering lips. So young Brent was not a lady's man, nor a company man, although there were stories of at least two pretty girls having

been in love with him ; and as to company, whenever the talk grew serious, Brent, as by natural right, began to speak freely, and spoke often with great success.

It was impossible to withstand the lover's entreaties ; and so little Mr. Brent, divided between uneasiness and satisfaction, fearing a repulse, and yet not without hope of now wholly regaining his footing in the widow's lively house, introduced his son to the ladies. All four were in the drawing-room when the gentlemen were announced, and young Brent was sufficiently master of himself not to betray any preference for one daughter before another. Indeed, he rather avoided Sophia, talked more and more freely with Caroline and Sibyl ; and so few and shy were the glances he cast at her he worshipped, that four pair of female eyes did not, in a quarter of an hour, detect him as lover. Caroline rather liked his conversation, which was a trifle bookish ; but Sibyl pronounced him awkward and bashful. Sophia said nothing from which one might have fancied that she thought the more ; but it is certain that, as yet, she had not recognised a lover.

Young Brent left the house enchanted. He was ready to say, like the dazzled queen of the East, that the half had not been told him. Sophia Temple did, indeed, look very lovely that morning ; and as her face was in a most particular sense a face of expression, no portrait could do her justice. The young lover flew off in an ecstasy of praise. Was ever a true picture of womanhood seen before ? Was not Sophia the living presentation of that image of sense and sensibility which hovers around every man's fancy, as the likeness of the true woman, but which seldom takes form and feature, once or twice in a generation perhaps ? I pardon the lad's raptures. And in her face that afternoon there was a delightful harmony of expression, sweetness and seriousness, animation with a suspicion of humour, and a sort of tender sadness predominating over all the rest. Is not the highest beauty always touched with sadness ?

The worldly mother, who never lost a chance of instructing her daughters, and eliciting their opinions for correction, asked them what they thought of their new acquaintance.

'Dull,' replied Sibyl, finishing him off with one word imperially delivered.

'What do you say, Caroline ?'

'O, not dull, certainly,' answers Miss Bookworm ; 'we talked about astronomy.'

'Don't mistake the drawing-room for the library, Car,' remarked her mother briskly. 'Learned talk is very affected. Be as well educated as you please, but don't seem so. Now, Sophia, what did you think of young Mr. Brent ?'

'I hardly formed an opinion, mamma.'

'You should have done so, Sophia. Never be listless. And now, girls, shall I tell you my opinion?'

'Do, mamma!' the three exclaimed. For mamma was always racy and pungent and instructive, especially in her professorial moods.

'He is a little sheepish, and he wants, not only confidence, but manner as well. A few remarks from some observing lady-friend, such as—'

'Yourself, mamma!' Car cried.

'Well, dear, let us say myself, then. It would do him a world of good. He is a diligent young fellow, and would soon



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improve if he could be got to give his mind to it. Those quiet retiring young men have often a great deal in them, and remember, girls, that if they do not shine at the times or in the ways in which ordinary men of the world do, still they are sometimes brilliant and effective where men of mere manner and accomplishment quite fail. Don't be prejudiced, even by sheepishness, Sibyl; all is not homeliness that seems so. And Caroline, my love, do give up that bad habit of trying to talk what you call sense; you have plenty of attractions without that. And, Sophia, when shall I teach you not to be listless? appear so if you please, for I admit it gives you a charming look at times; but still, have your wits about you. I assure you, dear, at your age, if a young fellow had been ten minutes in the room, I could have told you everything about him, down to the colour of his eyelashes, and

no one ever called me a starrer. It was observation, dear, nothing more. Now do observe. Girls,' she said in conclusion, with an air of earnest appeal, 'when shall I make you women of the world?'

Vigilant, energetic, good-humoured, there she stood with her delicate daughters around her, training them for society and conquest and applause with as much patience and enthusiasm as though she had been a religious superior making spiritual pupils



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ready for an eternal state. But shrewd little Mrs. Temple well knew how fleeting her world was.

'What a pity it lasts so short a time!' she would often say. 'But that is not our doing. Let us make the most of it while we can.'

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH THE MATRIMONIAL FISHING-ROD IS SHOWN TO HAVE (AT TIMES) A PRETTY WOMAN AT ONE END AND A GREAT FOOL AT THE OTHER.

FATE decreed that just at this time Caroline and Sibyl should each get a lover. An elderly couple of good family and fortune, Doolittle by name, lived in the neighbourhood; and these having

but one child, a son, who would inherit a large estate, decided to give him a profession, that he might escape the dangers of an unemployed youth. He was sent into the army, and was at present upon leave.

Egerton Doolittle was a tall young man, slim, with light hair and a lisping speech. His attractions, if he had any, were neither of body nor of mind; for as to the body he was feeble in gait, with long legs of inadequate thickness, and he was destitute of eyebrows. The utmost assiduity also failed to bring out a moustache, although he used capillary fluids of appalling strength, rightly judging that for a man with a military career before him a certain amount of hair on the face is as essential as uniform or a sword. His mind was of a similar pattern, weak, reclining, and inane; in a word, he had drawn the line between sanity and imbecility with a most baffling nicety. He walked with his head a little on one side, dressed in the top of the fashion, wore as many different suits as there are hours in the day, lost money mildly at cards, and came to church regularly every Sunday morning, saying his prayers out of a book the size of a sixpence. He had a creditable desire to read only such publications as were likely to improve his mind, and he always inquired if a work was erroneous or not, saying that he was afraid lest he might be led into the perusal of something erroneous, and might never find it out. He admired women and adored cleverness, frankly confessing that he had none of his own, and thought it 'such a useful thing, you know.' Indeed, he might have sat for the immortal Mr. Toots, with whom he had so much in common that I fear readers may think Egerton Doolittle only a study of that great prince of noodles. But Egerton is a man by himself, in spite of a resemblance which fairly suggests that he is no more than a reflection.

He met Car Temple at a ball and danced with her, and the young lady, true to herself, inquired in one of the pauses of the dance if he had read Alison's *History of Europe*. Doolittle, whose weakness was not historical study, was able, with tolerable readiness, to assure her that he had not. He then sank into silence, that this part of the conversation might settle into his mind. Presently he inquired,

'Is that work you spoke of just now a very big work?'

'Very big,' she answered.

'More than one volume?' he asked, resolved not to let the talk flag.

'One volume!' replied Caroline. 'A dozen, I daresay.'

'A dozen!' exclaimed Doolittle. He was so overwhelmed by this statement that he did not alter a muscle of his face nor emit a syllable for full five minutes. Then he began again:

'You haven't read it, have you?'

'O dear, yes,' Caroline replied, with the confidence of a practised student.

'The whole dozen volumes?' inquired Doolittle, who could scarcely believe his ears.

'The whole dozen volumes,' Caroline answered, repeating his words with a not ungraceful playfulness.

'Then you must be a tremendously clever girl,' he said, gazing at her with profound admiration and awe.

'Clever, because I have read twelve volumes!' cried Caroline, who had a sprightly wit. 'I shall read twelve hundred, and see what you say then.'

'No,' Egerton said gravely; 'you will not read twelve hundred volumes, I am sure.'

Egerton meditated for another few minutes. Then he asked,

'Is it an erroneous work?'

'Thoroughly,' Car replied, with decision. She was a Radical.

'Don't you think it dangerous to read erroneous works?'

'Don't know,' Car answered. 'Not very.' She tossed her head with a mixture of laughter and light scorn.

'If I were to read twelve volumes of an erroneous work I should be quite upset,' Egerton said, as if he were talking of lobster salad. 'Upset for weeks. But you are tremendously strong, and you know it—in mind, I mean.'

Caroline was not displeased with Doolittle's frank admiration of her powers, nor did she despise it, though its silliness she plainly saw. Something told her he would one day be a lover, and she did not turn from the prospect with aversion. Doolittle was rich, but I do not mean to say that his riches alone made him tolerable in her eyes. She is not the first clever girl who has liked a man—as *husband*—because he was weak-minded. Car Temple, fond of clever men, preferred in the matrimonial relation a fool; but her actual or possible reasons for this preference must be discovered by more penetrating dissectors of human nature than myself.

Doolittle astonished his parents mightily when he informed them, with unusual bluntness and energy, that he had fallen in love. Astonishment with the old people quickly ran on into fear; for in a brain so weak as his what might not love accomplish? They trembled lest they should hear him say that some pretty milliner or shop-girl had conquered him; for he affected little flirtations of that sort. When, therefore, the young simpleton gave the name of Car Temple his parents could not altogether conceal their feelings of relief. It is true their acquaintance with the Temples was the slightest in the world; but still she was a lady, and they accepted her as daughter-in-law prospective

without any hesitation. Equipped with this permission, Doolittle flew off down street, not intending to call on his beloved, or, indeed, to do anything in particular, when, as the Fates would have it, he tumbled into his love-making in this fashion. Who should he see, swimming gracefully up the drowsy street, but Car herself, tall, elegant, and altogether bewitching. Doolittle's heart flew into his mouth. He slackened speed, lest he should come upon her before he had braced his nerves for the meeting; and while he loitered, Car turned into a haberdasher's shop. He now drew near cautiously, and soon spied her seated at the counter trying on gloves. Doolittle, never a wholly responsible being, was so fluttered that his behaviour for the next few seconds must have had something mechanical in it. He stole into the shop, and Car was surprised to hear a chair softly drawn across the floor towards her, and before she could look up it was placed at her side; and then she saw Doolittle sinking into it, his eyes fixed on her face all the time as if he had been magnetised. Car felt the absurdity of the situation; but with a readiness which her mother would have praised, she resolved not to let the shop people see anything to laugh at. So she gave Doolittle a lively little nod, as if his conduct were the most natural in the world, and holding up a pair of gloves, she asked her admirer if they were not a pretty colour.

'Capital gloves, I should say,' he replied. 'Do let me pay for them!'

'Pay for my gloves!' cried Car, breaking now into a hearty laugh at his absurdity.

'O, do let me pay for them,' he went on pleadingly. 'The girl in this shop is such a nice girl—such a tremendously nice girl. I often buy gloves of her; she is so nice. Do let me pay for your gloves.'

'We never pay here,' Car replied, happy in her excuse. 'Everything goes down in mamma's bill.'

'I am sorry for that,' the lover answered. 'I should have liked to pay for your gloves. O, how are you? Are you very well?' he asked, addressing the shop-girl, who had returned by this time.

She blushed at his salutation till she was like one of the beauties on her own glove-boxes.

Whether keen-witted Car did not quite approve of this sort of encounter under her very eyes, or whether she was already suited, I cannot tell; but she remarked that she had got all she wanted, and left the shop, not forbidding her admirer to follow her. Follow her he did, though in departing he manœuvred to get right behind her back, that he might freely bow his adieux to the nymph at the counter, which done he stepped into the

street with a face of great satisfaction, and walked at Miss Temple's side. For many steps he said nothing; at last he looked up.

'Did you say a dozen?'

'A dozen what?' Car asked. She had forgotten the conversation which had taken place a fortnight before.

'That there were a dozen volumes in that work you read?' he replied.

Car burst out laughing again.

'I am not quite sure of the number,' she said; 'a great many.'

'Not a dozen—only a great many,' he said, disappointed; and then, brightening at his own thought, he added: 'Big volumes?'

'Pretty big,' answered Car.

'Because,' he went on, with a vastly wise look, 'if the big volumes are twice as big as little volumes, then twelve would be twenty-four; would they not, Miss Temple?'

'I suppose so,' she answered, a little impatient.

'Anybody that reads twenty-four volumes must be tremendously clever,' Doolittle said, bringing out this conclusion with a triumphant air. 'I said you were tremendously clever; I know you are.'

After this came a pause, Doolittle walking reflectively at her side, and Car shaking with laughter, which by biting her lips she managed to hide. Then he took courage.

'Miss Temple, I want to marry a tremendously clever girl. I am not clever myself; I am very well, but not tremendously clever. Now, I want to marry a girl that can advise me and tell me what to talk about, and make up things for me to say, smart things, you know, that will look like my own. And I want a girl that will read works for me, and tell me if a work is erroneous; for I don't like to read erroneous works, Miss Temple. Now, do marry me, Miss Temple; for you are exactly that sort of girl, and you will take care of me—I mean I will take care of you. At least, I want you to marry me, if you don't very much object; I do, indeed, Miss Temple.'

It is a critical moment in a woman's life when she is asked if she will marry a man whom she does not altogether dislike, and no doubt Car felt something of the gravity of her position. But she felt its absurdity too, and nothing could restrain her laughter. Doolittle seemed much discomfited.

'Don't laugh,' he said dolefully. 'People always are laughing at me; and it is tremendously trying, you know.'

'I was not laughing at you,' Car replied, relieved now that the outburst was over. 'I was only thinking how vexed mamma will be with you for speaking to me in this sudden way.'

'Vexed, will she?' said Doolittle, with an air of trepidation; for they were close to the gate of the Beeches. 'Perhaps I had

better run home. Just advise me, for I feel tremendously nervous.'

'No; mamma won't be very angry,' Car answered reassuringly. 'She is walking in the garden. Come in and see her.'

Doolittle became confident again at these words, trusting in Car's superior knowledge; and into the garden they came where was a great parasol moving to and fro, and under its canopy there promenaded the stately little figure of Mrs. Barbara Temple.

'There is mamma,' Car cried, whether in jest or earnest he could not tell, and darting away she left him with her mother.

Now Mrs. Barbara Temple, watching the couple from beneath her parasol, had discerned in the twinkling of an eye how matters stood; and knowing the young man and perceiving his confusion, which returned when Car vanished, the little queen of women came forward with an air that would have reassured a greater dunce than Doolittle.

'You have been attending on my daughter,' she said, with her pleasantest smile. 'Most kind of you.'

'O, you think it really was kind, do you?' cried Doolittle, set on his feet at once. 'I am glad of that. I meant it kindly. I wanted to pay for her gloves; but she would not let me, as you have a bill at the shop. It is a very nice shop, Mrs. Temple, and Miss Johnson is a capital girl.'

'And who is Miss Johnson?' asked Mrs. Temple blandly.

'O, Miss Johnson is the girl that sells the gloves,' he answered. 'Perhaps I should not mention it to you'—here he giggled indescribably—'but she is a tremendously nice girl, and I have told her so several times.'

'Really, Mr. Doolittle,' she answered, with an air of reproof something similar to a blow with a feather, 'you should not talk in that way to young people.'

'O, you know, Mrs. Temple,' he replied with sudden sobriety, 'I never mean any harm in what I say. In fact, I very seldom mean anything at all. But I never mean any harm—never.'

For a few seconds they promenaded side by side, and Mrs. Temple thought it best to let him begin the next bout. He racked his brain for something to say.

'Can I carry your umbrella for you?' he asked at last.

'No, thank you,' she replied gaily. 'It is not heavy.'

'I should have thought it was heavy,' he replied. 'I am rather sorry it is not heavy. I should have liked to carry *your* umbrella for you.'

Pause and promenade again.

'Mrs. Temple'—he cleared his throat desperately, and she knew what was to come.

'Yes?'

'Your daughter—the one I wanted to buy the gloves for—is a tremendously clever girl.'

'People are generally pleased with her,' remarked the mother.

'Tremendously pleased, I should think. Do you know, Mrs. Temple, I should like to marry your daughter, if you did not mind. I should be particular about your not minding.'

Wise Mrs. Temple accepted and treated his proposal as if it had been couched in the most formal style.

'Such a desire is always complimentary,' she remarked.

'May I ask if your parents know of this attachment?'

'O certainly, yes; this morning,' he replied.

'Do they approve of it?'

'O, quite. In fact my father said he was surprised at my showing so much sense; that he would never have expected it of me. O yes, they are quite pleased, I assure you, Mrs. Temple.'

'In that case,' the managing woman said blandly, 'I shall leave the matter in my daughter's hands. I have no objection, Mr. Doolittle—indeed that is not saying enough—I am pleased.'

And in this way clever, bookish, lively Car Temple was matrimonially engaged to one who might fairly be described as the silliest young man in all England.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH ANOTHER VIEW OF THE MATRIMONIAL FISHING-ROD IS GIVEN, STILL SHOWING A PRETTY WOMAN AT ONE END, BUT NO FOOL AT THE OTHER.



THE next to follow—and the succession was rapid—was the beauty Sibyl. Sibyl's engagement was quite as singular as Car's, and in neither case did these really beautiful and spirited young ladies marry equals. Fortune and rank were even enough, but in all beside there was the most unexpected and unreasonable disparity.

There lived a quarter of a mile down the road from the Beeches a wealthy bachelor named Goldmore—a man of fifty years or thereabout, tall, pompous,

and imposing to look at—a man of great solemnity, who never laughed except in a responsible sort of way, and who kept his coat well buttoned round his ample frame, typifying, it might be, the reserve with which he wrapped his personality from view. He was the sort of man who, in a picture-book, would look the very image of a respectable great Briton. There was an air of steady solvency about him—a balance at my banker's air—which was very telling. The most timid shopkeeper would have given Goldmore credit for a thousand pounds before even hearing his name. His mien would have carried him. With his majesty, the bigness of his frame, his vast bony features, and the sober colour of his attire, he looked rather like an elephant who had cast his trunk, and was going round the world on a tour of solemn survey in a coat and trousers.

Archibald Goldmore, Esq., had a nephew—his heir—who used to come and see him often, and who, being on the look-out for a wife, was struck with the beauty of Sibyl Temple. This Harry Goldmore was a lively young fellow, but no great favourite with his uncle. He was heir, because there was none other forthcoming, but nephew and uncle never quite hit it off. The young man was one of those fortunate or unfortunate people—very much either they are sure to be—who, without being exactly selfish, have yet an inordinate idea of their own claims upon life and their fellow creatures, with a proportionate disregard of other people's feelings. Young Goldmore would always help himself to the best, even before his uncle's eyes, and would never say, 'Uncle, won't you try this?' or, 'Let me recommend you so and so'—trifling attentions, but by such little acts young men sometimes make their fortunes. The nephew, too, well knowing that his uncle employed an unsurpassable cook and prided himself upon his table, would yet in the most flippant style find fault with dishes, and declare that in his club in London the cooking was fifty times better.

'Outrageous sauce this!' he exclaimed one evening as he tasted his boiled mutton; 'enough to put one off one's feed.'

'At your age,' remarked his uncle solemnly, 'I got very little sauce at all.'

'Gave enough, I daresay!' retorted the witty young man, with a great roaring laugh; after which he finished his mutton and asked for another help, administering the condemned sauce plentifully.

From these few hints every reader of observation can fill up a sketch of this young fellow's character, and it need only be said that he was tolerably good-looking, by no means vicious, and with very passable manners, becoming almost agreeable on

the rare occasions when, standing in awe of somebody, he had the sense to curb his frolicsome disposition.

He saw Sibyl Temple. Used as he was to believe the finest horses bred for him, the finest vintages grown for him, the richest dishes cooked for him, he, hearing and seeing that Sibyl was the handsomest girl in Kettlewell, easily concluded that she had been reared for him. So he began making eyes at her, and having perceived that she noticed his attentions—which she could not fail to do—he treated the conquest as made, and told his uncle on Sunday at lunch that he loved Miss Sibyl Temple, and that he had little doubt that she reciprocated the passion.

Beneath some of our big middle-aged waistcoats there lie strange secrets. This ponderous Archibald Goldmore, elevated, pompous, and remote from sentiment as he appeared, had a buried sorrow of his own. Years ago his only brother, Goldmore's father, died. The two brothers had ever been fondly attached. Life's early struggle they had faced side by side, and an affection never to be destroyed had, during those early years, laced their hearts together. The brother died. In dying he put his thin white hand out from under the bedclothes, and, catching Archibald's wrist, begged him not to forget his little son soon to be an orphan. Archibald promised, and that promise, never broken, and reinforced year after year by memories of the dead man, made the uncle merciful to the rudeness and the folly of this rash and uncongenial youth. When the young man spoke of marriage, in some inexplicable way a reminiscence of long ago stole into the uncle's heart, and made him sad and gentle.

'Harry,' he said, with unusual kindness, 'you are young to marry, and have little of your own, but I approve of the idea on the whole. I shall make your way plain.'

'O, that of course,' replied the easy youth. 'I settled that in my mind long ago;' and he laughed loudly.

'Suppose we make a call on the Temples to-morrow,' the uncle said.

'No, not to-morrow, thank'ee,' the passionate lover said, shaking his head. 'To-morrow I ride over to Blancourt to see Jefferson. Never hurry after the women. They think quite enough of themselves without our help;' which delicate speech he enlivened with a fresh laugh, loud, hearty, and vacant.

The matter dropped. But at dinner that day, after the cloth had been removed, Archibald Goldmore, gravely renewing the subject, said,

'In a curious way your choice of Miss Temple—we say nothing about her view of the matter—'

'O, that's all right enough,' young Harry said.

'That we shall see,' his uncle remarked; 'for the present,

never mind. I was going to say your choice in a curious way approves itself to me; for do you know, Harry, I once had thoughts of proposing to the young lady myself.'

'Of *what*?' screamed the nephew.

'Of proposing to the young lady myself,' the uncle repeated.

'Of *WHAT*?' exclaimed the nephew, again in a scream of undoubted surprise. He could neither believe his ears nor disbelieve them.

'Of proposing to the young lady myself,' Archibald Goldmore answered once more with steady solemnity.

His nephew would hear no more. He burst into a roar of laughter, threw himself back in his chair, laughed loud and long, changed the key of his laugh, went high, went low, slapped the table, and in a general way signified that the most comical idea ever heard of since ideas first began had just been let loose upon the world.

'It is perfectly true,' the uncle said, used to his nephew's mad moods, and not as yet affronted.

'At your age!' screamed the nephew, 'marry a lovely girl like that! Do you think she would have looked at you?' and so in a variety of phrases he put the absurdity, saluting each fancy with a fresh outburst of ridicule; while the uncle sat fuming over insults which were truly exasperating. But he was a man of great self-restraint, and he said nothing.

All that night the nephew persisted in his ridicule: 'Uncle, what kind of a coat would you be married in?' 'Where would you have gone for your honeymoon?' 'How many bridesmaids would you have had?' 'Would it not have been suitable to have sage spinsters of fifty?' and so on in an insane, but offensive, succession. The rude young fellow thought only of his sallies and his amusement; perhaps a little tincture of annoyance lay at the bottom, and made his jests taunts indeed. In any case, he jested to his heart's content; and the uncle, boiling with anger, disclosed nothing of his fury.

The nephew thought of a final witticism. After they had gone to bed, he marched to his uncle's door and tapped; and the uncle hearing his voice, which for wittier effect he pitched low and serious, fancied he was going to apologise. The great man opened his door.

'Uncle,' said the nephew in a grave tone, which carried on the illusion.

'Well, Henry?'

'Something has just struck me.'

'Well, Henry?'

'I could not go to bed without asking you.'

'What is it?'

‘Make me godfather to number one.’

He dropped his voice lower than ever. And screaming again with rapture, he retreated down the corridor, and left his uncle to go to bed with what appetite for sleep he might.

The next day he rode over to Blancourt, and at night returned to dinner. He was tired, and spoke little beyond a grumble at the fish. But when dessert began, feeling his energies recruited, he thought it time to show something more of his playful ways.

‘Thought again about your marriage, uncle?’

‘Yes, Henry.’

‘You could not do a wiser thing than propose to a young beauty,’ said this young man of fatal rudeness. ‘The younger and the more beautiful, the wiser you will be.’

Here came the facetious scream. It was always the same : short, shrill, spasmodic, irrational.

‘So I think, Henry.’

‘Only don’t propose to Miss Sibyl Temple ; she’s mine, you know.’

‘Have you asked her?’

‘No ; but I shall to-morrow.’

‘Henry, I asked her to-day.’

‘What, for me?’

‘No, for myself.’

‘You did?’

‘I did.’

‘Now don’t begin with any tricks, uncle,’ the young man said, rising from his chair with alarm in his face ; ‘I hate practical jokes.’

‘This is no joke,’ the uncle answered with calmness. ‘I asked Miss Sibyl Temple to-day to marry me, and she said “Yes.” She is my affianced wife, and with her mother’s full consent.’

Poor Harry Goldmore’s face fell as visibly during this announcement as if it had been a house tumbling down story by story. At the end—the speech was slowly delivered by his uncle—he called out in exactly the note in which an angry boy says ‘I won’t play any more,’

‘Well, it’s the shabbiest thing I ever heard of.’

‘Henry, listen to me,’ the uncle said severely. ‘You are a thoughtless young man, and you know well your affections were not engaged ; I doubt, indeed, if you have any affections to engage. You have been rude and even brutal in your language to me : I forgive you ; you have had a lesson. I would have provided for your marriage with Miss Temple, and still I will provide for ti with any young lady I approve of. I am going to my library

now, and you had better think this matter over, and ask yourself whether you would not be wise if you learnt good manners. I am not harsh with you, and as long as you are not immoral I never will be harsh, for your father's sake. But I shall marry Miss Sibyl Temple, and you shall not.'

He rose and left the room, majestic, like the Tower of Babel walking off with itself; and the young man, petrified, followed him with his eyes as he departed, and then sank speechless into a chair.

And thus, reader, was the second, the beautiful, Miss Temple engaged to be married.

CHAPTER V.

TO BE READ CAREFULLY, FOR IT IS LITTLE LESS THAN A HANDBOOK FOR LOVERS,
WITH FULL INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHEN AND HOW.

THE course of true love, if it never runs smooth, very often runs slowly. No one can say that Car or Sibyl Temple married for love; we need not assert that they sold themselves; marriages such as theirs are made every day, with the sanction of the Church and the praise of the world; but they are not ideal marriages, not romantic—not the stuff out of which love stories can be made. Sweet Sophia Temple, the beauty and heroine of this tale, was not proposed to so abruptly, nor married so hastily.

Young Brent was shy. To increase his shyness he was passionately in love, and love made a thousand things delights to him which a well-informed modern man might do for his lady once, but not twice certainly. For instance, young Brent would stroll about the town half a morning waiting for a chance meeting; and if, after he had executed a perfect walking-match in slow time, he met Sophia, and she gave him a smile, or exchanged a few words, he would return home all aglow, and could hardly sit down to his geology, so hot his flame would burn. Week after week this went on. Silly young fellow, when he might have been bathing in the full tide of courtship, to be thus timidly treading the margin of the golden sea! Yet perhaps not so silly after all; since most people agree that love's preludes are so delicious that they may well be lengthened; and some say that the water is pellucid near the shore and turbid when we venture farther out.

This I will say in defence of him. Sophia, more than most women, was fitted for this slow worshipping kind of courtship. It often struck me that she was already what one might imagine a good warm-hearted and beautiful woman becoming in a more exalted state of existence. She had the gold of our nature, with very little of its dross. From her, more than from any woman I

ever knew, or man either, did I learn how comely human nature may be when harmoniously developed ; how various qualities of mind and soul, which we are apt to think conflicting, such as humour and devotion, passion and purity, may, when combined in proper proportions, be each the complement of the other. Sophia changed from mood to mood with an ease, an absence of constraint, which was the sign of a nature reconciled to life in the best sense. I am going to mention a trivial occurrence, but to me it was significant. I saw her one morning greatly interested in an account of a wedding-robe, its colour, trimmings, and the usual sequels—just as seriously interested as the most dressy of her sex could have been. A little while after, when a piece of poetry was read aloud by somebody in the company—one of Tom Hood's, I think, just published ; a little fragment written in that note of mingled humour and sadness which was so much his own—I saw Sophia's face with a ripple of fun on it passing, with the poem, into seriousness. It seemed as if the soul of the poet in its double mood of laughter and tears were expressing itself in her lovely features. It is a small matter to mention—laughable, perhaps—but it impressed me, and it was indeed a disclosure of her character. She had a frank spontaneous sympathy with life all round and in every part, such as I never met in any one beside herself. By reason of this virtue she was always interested in what was going on, and the very quality which subdued her individuality in one way made her character fresh and delightful in another. Sophia charmed by her constellation of charms, the grouping of virtues and graces of body and mind, which seemed to make her sympathetic with the most opposite persons, and at home in the most various scenes.

Was there a key to all this ? or was she simply a Phoenix in muslin, a paragon, admirable and inexplicable ? It is my conviction that her mother's constant lectures on the subject of women making themselves fascinating—lectures which fell on ears that interpreted every word into a new and higher language than the original—gave that bent to her disposition which made her what she was. The little morning-room disquisitions, with ballrooms and lawns and dinner-tables for texts, concerning dresses and marriages and carriages and fortunes and smiles and postures and witty answers and complaisancy,—these all Sophia carried up to a higher level of idea and aspiration. She resolved to charm others with happiness and goodness in view, not mere society conquests. Mrs. Barbara Temple's prelections were delivered in the spirit of Lord Chesterfield, low and selfish, under a thin disguise of good-humour. Sophia, by the instinct of a lofty nature, resolved to use the means her mother recommended, but with a different end in view. And here was the pleasing origin-

ality of her life; she used worldly methods for most unworldly ends. The polish, the graces, the social attractions, the accomplishments, literature and wit, which saints either despise or at best only tolerate, she used as the very material out of which her noble purpose must be woven. And so she remained rather worldly than otherwise on the face of her life, and serious people declared she needed conversion. But in the secret interior of her intentions she was truly devoted, trying, by the spell of a beautiful womanhood, to make those with whom she lived better and happier. Certain wise men explain the miracle of Pentecost as having lain in the ears that heard, not in the tongues that spoke; the listeners clothing the speech with a sense of their own. So worldly good-humoured Mrs. Barbara Temple said her shrewd say; but the words as they pattered from her lips caught from the daughter's finer ear a music and a meaning which the speaker never understood.

With slow delight, with many a blush, with stolen glances and few shy words, the courtship of Percival and Sophia progressed, and each had commended the other in their inmost souls long before any love was expressed. Brent senior had quite recovered his spirits in the presence of Mrs. Barbara Temple, and his easy-moved laughter was heard in dining-room and drawing-room as of old. Accordingly, to and fro, from house to house, the families went; and the young people had plenty of occasions of making love, though it was as yet love unspoken.

The reader who is a swimmer often sees intrepid men of the water taking a header into the sea with a prodigious splash, and reappearing with a mighty puff and a somewhat dazed expression. These heroes call it enjoyment; and it may be. For my part, I like taking to the water gently. To stand beside some clear summer tide, and gently, with scarcely a ripple of the wave, inch by inch, to sink into the ocean, and feel that delightful embrace creeping up and round you, and then at last to lay your cheek against ocean's yielding breast and glide and paddle away, having hardly wetted the tip of your nose all the time: that is my notion of earthly paradise. Applied to love the analogy takes this form: some people plunge into love, crash, dive, reappear, often looking a little the worse for it. Others sink into love inch by inch, letting the delightful dream enfold them slowly, till they are borne altogether away. There are, then, two schools of lovers—those who plunge, and those who inch; and those who plunge are wise, but those who inch are wiser.

Percival, either by foresight or simply through circumstance, was an 'incher.' Pleasant work he found it. But is a grave history like mine to detail every nod, glance, blush, smile, sigh, and so on? or are grave students like my readers to be so trifled

with? Let me, with wise reserve, be content, for this chapter at least, with one closing scene.

End of January. Weather, much rain and windy; time, 3.15 P.M.; scene, dining-room at Mrs. Barbara Temple's; persons present, Percival and Sophia. Mark, reader, they have been here since the rest rose from lunch, talking about anything or nothing, but growing warmer—at least Percival was growing warmer—every moment. He believes the hour has come. So stand the two at the window, watching the drops that course down the panes, and idly racing drop against drop. Sophia wins three drops running.

'Ah,' Percival remarks with a sigh, 'it is no use. I can never stand against you.'

Sophia thinks she understands this, and sighs, too, faintly, blushes about the thousandth part of a tint, droops her head about the millionth part of an inch. He sees all.

'What a stormy day!' he says next.

'Very stormy.'

'And yet it does not seem dull, not in here, does it?' Artful young man! he lowered his voice towards the end of the sentence, as if the very walls must not hear, but she only.

'O no; it does not seem a bit dull in here,' she responds. There is a regular lovers' way of saying the same thing to and fro; the simpletons mean to intimate their entire oneness in all things, spoken or thought.

Sophia looked very lovely just at that moment, with the fear that is joy hovering over her, casting lights on her eyes, flushes on her cheek, and making her every slightest motion tender and gentle. He feels that now he is full in the sway of the whirlpool; on and on he will be borne until he has told her all.

'Something very singular happened to me in Australia,' Percival says, bending nearer to her; 'something I am half afraid to speak of.'

Here he stops.

'Tell me about it,' she whispers, O so low, so deliciously! She meant: Anything you say will be sweet to hear—especially what you are going to say.

'It was something so strange, so unforeseen! One of those things which happen we cannot tell how, leading to we cannot tell what.'

He stopped again. Again she murmured one of those sentences which women never speak but to one ear only, unbaring their hearts.

'Tell me about it.'

'While I was in Australia I fell in love with a girl, who is the queen of my heart, and shall be till I die.'

Her posture never changed, not by the movement of a finger; and I do not think the sharpest watcher would have seen a quiver of her eyelid or a tremor of her lip. But the life went from her face and eyes, and the fear that is joy vanished, leaving behind the fear that is fear indeed.

'Are the girls—the girls—in Australia—very pretty?' she inquired, in a death-like voice.

The next moment she would be in his arms; the next moment his kiss would have dropped in a burning seal on her lips; the next moment she would have been his, declared so by signs which even her modesty could not have hidden. Alas, how short is the space allotted to whispering blushing love in this rough world! Just then the dining-room door opened, and in rushed little Mr. Brent, roaring with laughter, stamping on the floor, choking, rubbing his hands. And Mrs. Barbara Temple followed laughing, but not in his fashion.

'And then,' cried the parson between his rapturous bursts, 'then, without another word, down sat the dean, looking so important, so dignified, so reproving—just like an angry turkey-cock, I assure you, Mrs. Temple. Down he sat on his new hat—crash! it was stove in—his new hat! And up he jumps again, and exclaims, "Bless me, my hat!"'

Rosy with his boisterous mirth, he went up and down, not knowing what he had done, though quick-eyed Mrs. Temple suspected, and would have withdrawn. Percival looked inexpressibly discomfited. Who should make the next move? It was Sophia.

'Good to have a merry heart, Mr. Brent!' she said, smiling at him in a way which showed—he told his son as they went home—that she at least enjoyed the story. And she darted from the room. But Percival could not see her face before she was gone.

Fixed he stood, poor baffled young fellow; the arms dropped at his side which were to have been wound about the girl he loved; his face a blank, his heart full of vexation. Meanwhile the little Rector fell into a chair, and sent up peal after peal of most obstreperous mirth.

'The dean was new, and the hat was new. When he sat down we heard the crash. When he got up no one living could have told which looked more dismal, his face or his hat. "*Bless me, my hat!*" I hear him saying it now, Mrs. Temple. The finest sight I ever saw. Percival, Percival, *why* don't you laugh?'

(To be continued.)

ANSWER TO 'A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE.'

I HOLD your message in my hand,
A message sweet to me,
Wherein you promise me your love
To all eternity.
You want to know your answer now,
If joy or pain your part,
And whether I as well as you
Am pierced by Cupid's dart?

O darling, you can little tell
How much I love you now;
To you for ever faithful be
Is my fond sacred vow:
Could I but press your hands in mine,
And give you for your own
This heart—this life that lives for you,
And for the past atone,

O love, what joy would then be mine!
An ocean wide of bliss,
A perfect sense of calm and rest,
All centred in a kiss!
A joy so deep, so vast, so great—
A joy for me alone
To know that you love me so well,
And want me for your own.

Though, dear one, you are far away,
And leave me here alone,
Yet I am sure for more than this
The future will atone;
When you and I shall meet again,
And meet to part no more,
O, then shall all forgotten be
The time our hearts were sore!

If months would only hasten on,
And fleet this glad New Year,
'Twould join our lives in one, and bring
Our happiness quite near;
So this the answer that I send,
'Tis all that I may say—
To me the best that time can bring
Will be our wedding-day!

FLORANCE.

A DAY WITH A CITY COMPANY.

IT so happened, in the course of my wanderings through the wilderness of this world, as good John Bunyan begins the *Pilgrim's Progress*, that I alighted upon a place where there was a certain den, which was a den of a very agreeable description, being none other than the study or den of a kind and very learned friend, who owned one of the pleasantest of vicarages in the environs of London. I marked the day in question both with a red letter and with a white stone. My host was one of the few men whom I know with a European reputation, who hospitably entertained me, and also gave me a kind of intellectual fare, which I was hardly likely to obtain at any other table than his own. He realised more than any other clergyman I have known Praed's pretty poem of the Vicar, only Praed's Vicar was quite a commonplace kind of person in comparison with my friend. He was one who, in a remarkable degree, harmonised the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove. Cicero said of Plato that he talked as Jupiter would talk if Jupiter spoke Greek; but I will say of my host that he talked as Cicero or Plato might have talked if those illustrious personages had spoken English. It hardly needed the curious and interesting history of the later proceedings of the day to embalm it in my memory. As I sat discussing palimpsests and variorum readings, uncial and cursive manuscripts, the sweet chime of the village bells came across the landscape. The tone harmonised well

with the pretty scenery, the 'greenerie and abundance,' the roses and honeysuckles, the trellised paths and embowered seats.

'I did not know that you had established an afternoon service in this little place, vicar.'

'My friend, you have come upon a solemn anniversary. To-day we celebrate a pious and immortal memory.'

'Who might that happen to be?'

'It is the memory of a benefactor of the human species.'

'And have you a special service about him?'

'Something of the sort; at least, a sermon is always preached on the occasion of his anniversary.'

Then the story was told me. It is one, I suppose, which has many parallels in the metropolis and its neighbourhood. There is the great and worshipful Society of Envelope-makers. This Society had a Benefactor. Indeed, it possessed a variety of benefactors, who were extremely solvent during their lives, and proved very lucrative after their demise. This ingenuous Envelope-maker bequeathed a considerable amount to the liverymen of his Company, and they naturally held his memory in pious veneration. He was buried in one of the prettiest parts of the lovely churchyard. Hither resort the affectionate Company, as to a shrine. The benefactor had made provision that he should have a becoming monument, and with pious care the Company, as a company, visited it regularly every year.

On this solemn and edifying occasion the vicar had to preach a sermon before the master and brethren of the worshipful Company. After the service the Company inspected the monument, which they were, allegorically speaking, supposed to bedew with their tears. They then proceeded to relieve their feelings, after this great moral tension, at some hotel in the neighbourhood, where they still farther celebrated the benefactor in a way which would have been highly agreeable to his feelings, if he had been originally a man of a convivial turn of mind.

I was invited by the kind-hearted vicar to accompany him in his rounds through the parish, and to attend service, if I was so disposed to witness the proceedings of the City Company. A great deal is said about the proceedings of City Companies of the present day, and there is actually a Commission to sit upon them, and inquire into their history and condition. I am not writing these few lines either in their attack or defence, and make no doubt that, like all time-worn institutions, they are susceptible of improvement and extension. But it may be worth while looking at the simple, kindly, picturesque history of the day's proceedings, especially as in this era of Gladstonian legislation such proceedings may become numbered with the past; and certainly no proceedings more simple, kindly, and natural could be devised, with the quaint and picturesque, such as gives tone and colour to our workaday history, and relieves the sombreness which, I am afraid, mainly characterises City life.

The country parish through which we bent our steps was not as in the olden days of romantic

beauty. London had stretched out its long arms and overtaken this sylvan neighbourhood, as it has overtaken many others. The bricks and mortar had broken out in divers spots—provocative of chronic irritability to the lovers of a past day. Still there are some delicious bits in our village of Highdowns, notably about the old manor-house and the old rectory. The churchyard was one of extraordinary beauty, and noted as such among the churchyards of the *entourage* of London. It seemed all that is meant by 'a cemetery,'—the sleeping-place of the just. I have known of persons who have wandered to this spot on a summer's day, and there have looked and gazed, and softly wished that their own bones should find a resting-place in this lovely secluded acre of God. One might easily spend a profitable time, like Hervey, in meditating among the tombstones. The panorama surveyed from the churchyard and from some other points in the neighbourhood is replete with beauty and interest. The land is one of hills and streams, of fountains and brooks. A certain keen observer writes respecting it: 'The country is exceedingly pleasant, green, abundantly wooded, the trees large and various; undulating, the hills affording very pleasant views, the valleys many pretty field-paths and quiet shady lanes, with hedges full of hawthorns, wild roses, honeysuckles and brambles and bluebells growing everywhere by the waysides.' The waters are gathered into a large lake, one of the largest near London, haunted by many kinds of waders and water-fowl. Some of my readers may be surprised to hear that there is a beautiful little book on the 'birds of Middlesex,' and that the heron, wild-duck, and teal are

to be found within half a dozen miles of Regent Circus.

I cannot say that the church exactly corresponds in beauty to the churchyard. Yet a lover of old churches might find scope for a keen and interesting examination. Restoration has done something, but done it in a poor sort of way. It has put in some poor commonplace windows, and left the deep heavy galleries; but there is a fine old font with an arcade of intersecting arches. The old bare arches on octagonal piers were probably remnants of an older foundation. But there are some interesting monuments, as is almost invariably the case with churches in the neighbourhood of London. Here, in life-size marble, lies a lawyer of the time of King William III., who was once a Commissioner of the Great Seal, and appears, even in his tomb, to be very proud of that distinction; for he wears a Chancellor's robe, his purse, and flowing wig. Also one of our old dramatists, and a bishop of our Church.

Such were the surroundings amid which the City Company were to spend a festive day. To use Goldsmith's expression, they could here while away a day without offence to God or injury to man. If the worshipful Envelope-makers had the pleasure of an outing, it must always be remembered that they were sacrificing the business or pleasure of some of the most valuable hours of one of the best days in the year. This was the reason of the comparative smallness of the contingent that could celebrate the benefactor on his chosen day.

It was a mild lovely afternoon. As we wandered through the church the breeze stole in laden with the scent of flowers and the sweet low murmur of the infinite summer life. The light could

hardly penetrate through the small windows to the gloom of the galleries and arches. It realised Spenser's weird line, 'A little gloaming light much like a shade.' The hour of service was reached and passed, but there was no symptom of anything in the way of a congregation. There were plenty of houses and cottages in sight; but nowhere along the paths was there any view of enlightened parishioners wending their way in a churchward direction. In George Herbert's time, according to Izaak Walton, whose venerable statements appear to be hardly free from a little exaggeration, the labourers would leave plough and spade at the tone of the tinkling bell to attend service. That state of things has passed away, leaving it an open question whether 'merrie England' is as merrie, or as wise, or as religious as she used to be. This, however, was not a regular service, but an extraordinary one, held only once a year; and those who had no share in the benefactor's liberal provisions might be excused if they did not honour the pious and immortal memory. Presently, however, there was a sound of carriage-wheels, and a scamper of youthful feet, that betokened the presence of some abnormal event at the entrance. In the mean time I had taken my position in the neighbourhood of the kindly vicar. Very soon a set of stately personages, in Indian file, proceeded to fill one of the longest pews. The vision took my wandering thoughts back into the region of those famous civic worthies, Whittington and Gilpin. An expression of probity and prosperity pervaded the countenance of each worthy citizen of credit and renown. A gentle subdued melancholy stole over their faces, as if at times they were absorbed in

the abstract contemplation of the merits of the deceased benefactor. The organist was present, but there was not much choir; still the music harmonised thoroughly well with the strangeness and sweetness of the scene. Then the vicar ascended the pulpit. He did not, as might have been expected, enlarge on the virtues of the benefactor, and the great blessings of the established order of things to those who are beneficially concerned. It might be presumed that such topics had been thoroughly worn since the origin of the series. Such a series might by this time have constituted a set of Bampton or Hulsean Lectures. The sermon was, nevertheless, one of the most remarkable features of the customs of the day. The vicar preached with as much force and earnestness to his six auditors as if they had been six thousand in the nave of the Abbey or St. Paul's. The probability is that the six thousand would not have heard so good a sermon. I know one of our popular preachers who takes up into the pulpit two sermons—one of the very best, and one which he considers only middling. If there is not a first-rate congregation, he declines to produce his first-rate sermon, and gives his comparatively scanty congregation the theological pabulum which he considers to be quite good enough for them. Such, however, was not the case with our vicar. He gave us of his very best. The subject was one of great interest and importance at the present time, and he handled it with an amount of argument and illustration that would have done credit to Burke, and with a gift of spontaneous oratory that only made one deeply regret that it had not a more extended area for its exhibition. It was an audience few, but fit. Not one of the civic

brotherhood nodded his head, and several of them privately expressed to me afterwards their solemn appreciation of the sermon. Indeed, I fully believe that if, after the ancient fashion, the preacher had held up an hour-glass, he would have been encouraged by a deep murmur of appreciation from his audience to turn it up on the other side, and go in for another spell.

The service over, there ensued kindly greetings in the porch. Then a kind of informal procession was made up, and we moved in state to contemplate the tomb of the benefactor and inspect its present condition. It did not appear that its condition materially varied from the aspect which it presented the year before. A feeling of serenity, however, filled the bosom on the accomplishment of a solemn duty, analogous to that mysterious joy which gently steals over neuter plurals when they encounter a *verbum singulare*. I was a perfect stranger to the civic company, but then, to be sure, I had the best of introductions in my host. Presently the worthy master took off his hat, and in the pleasantest and most hospitable of tones invited me to become the guest of the company, as they were about to proceed to recruit themselves after their pilgrimage to this distant shrine and the observation of the rites due to the memory of the benefactor. Our place of refectation was to be at Hampstead, and conveyances were at the gate to take us there.

Our carriages drew up with much stateliness at the door of Jack Straw's Castle, to the great admiration of a little crowd and with the breathless attention of obsequious waiters. Years before, I had made my humble visit to this hostel, at the close of a long summer's excursion, and had drunk

a lowly mixture of beer and ginger-beer, knowingly yclept shandy-gaff in college-days. It had never entered my loftiest ambition that I should ever be an honoured guest within those expensive portals, and that the good of the land should there be spread before me. Some of the social aspects of the entertainment rather reversed my preconceived ideas. The host or chairman, who was an alderman, a member of Parliament, and in the natural course of things would be Lord Mayor, so far from being of the rubicund portwine appearance, was extremely simple in his tastes, one might almost say an abstemious man. He might have given the grandest of entertainments in his own civic hall; but he preferred Jack Straw's Castle for its comparatively wholesomer fare and most pleasant aspect.

And who shall say that our worshipful master was wrong? Certainly not I, as I looked from the bow-window of the castellated abode of the Man of Straw. Hampstead formerly belonged to the parish which I have called Highdowns, which I supposed led to the combination of the two places, though it is now broken up into many parishes of its own. I always understood that one should go to Rosherville to spend a happy day—only imagine that perfect bliss could be there secured for the very moderate outlay of eighteenpence! What a pity that the Caliph, who only scored eleven happy days in his life, had not lived in the Rosherville period of human history! For Rosherville, I am inclined at the present time to read Hampstead. So evidently thought the amorous young pairs, who in the soft summer evening were wandering on the hill or in the Vale of Health amid the furze and broom and brake. It

requires an effort of the imagination to recall the time when Hampstead, like Epsom, was once a veritable watering-place, to which denizens of London resorted to partake of the medicinal waters, and then repair to the Long Room for tea and cards.

Those famous young ladies, Evelina in her adventures, and Clarissa Harlowe, restaurated at Hampstead. Alas, the drainage and the railway have dealt unkindly with the medicinal springs! The place nevertheless continued so dissipated that it was exposed in a satire 'by a Serious Person of Quality.' Hampstead, however, contrived to survive this crushing blow. Many chapters of the social and literary history of England might be constructed out of topics connected with the hill and heath of Hampstead.

Our Jack Straw's Castle itself is full of interest. Down in the hospitable kitchen is a mantel-shelf supposed to be made from a gibbet on which a famous highwayman was executed on Hounslow Heath. Another gruesome memory is that of John Sadler, who, having beguiled many to their ruin, poisoned himself with prussic acid on the slope behind the Castle. He, no doubt, was the original of Charles Dickens's Mr. Merdle. Dickens, with whom conviviality was a creed, was very fond of coming over here, as may be repeatedly seen in Mr. Forster's work on his *Life and Letters*. It would be easy to cull out of contemporary literature the notes of many festive days at Hampstead. Dickens made himself a kind of laureate of eating and drinking, and ought to be held in special honour by the City companies. I take up the last volume of his *Letters*, and here is an extract from one to an American friend:

'Come to England! Come to England! Our oysters are small, I know. They are said by Americans to be coppery; but our hearts are of the largest size. We are thought to excel in shrimps; to be far from despicable in point of lobsters; and in periwinkles are considered to challenge the universe. Our oysters, small though they be, are not devoid of the refreshing influence which that species of fish is supposed to exercise in these latitudes. . . . I wish you had been at Greenwich the other day when a party of friends gave me a private dinner—public ones I have refused. C—— was perfectly wild at the *réunion*; and, singing all manner of marine songs, wound up the entertainment by coming home (six miles) in a little open phaeton of mine, on his head, to the mingled delight and indignation of the metropolitan police. We were very jovial indeed; and I assure you that I drank your health with fearful vigour and energy.'

It is rather curious that such a gifted being should write in so broadly farcical a way, and without any particular meaning. I am afraid that our Bands of Hope, on some future advanced day, may be forbidden to read Dickens. The great novelist and cold punch will certainly go down to posterity together. It may be said, however, for Dickens that it is not so much for sheer eating and drinking that his pedestrian Muse contends, as for the smiles, the shaken hand, the warm kind-heartedness, associated with eating and drinking in the British

mind as well as in the British body—which, by the way, are items in the argument probably not taken into account by the progenitors of the Bands of Hope.

I was informed that ours was only a very simple repast, and merely a faint example of what the Company was capable of showing upon a really high day. This left the mind in a state of pleasing bewilderment as to the potentiality of civic feasts. One of the Company remarked that we were going to have a little of all sorts, and all sorts were of the best. The talk was as good as the viands and the wines. The clerk of the Company came out with a wonderful amount of civic lore, tracing the fortunes of the Company beyond the time of the Great Fire, and giving traditions of their quiet, quaint old hall. We strolled to the window and took in the famous landscape, and revived some of its wealth of associations. The shuttlecock, conversation, flew about, and never fell to the floor for the want of a battledore. I have dined with my Lord Mayor himself in his castle of a Mansion House, where his eight-and-forty cooks have prepared a repast fit for the *Arabian Nights*; but the hospitality of Jack Straw's Castle did not fall behind. Our party broke up quite early in the summer twilight. My last look on the vicar revealed him whirled away in a carriage and pair—at the expense of the benefactor—through leafy lanes to his Arcadian home; while the master's brougham set me down close to my lodging, towards which, like old Pepys, I gaily fared.



AN OLD ITALIAN VALENTINE :

Bante's Sonnet to Beauty and Virtue.

(From the 'Vita Nuova.')

Two ladies on the summit of my mind
Their station take, to hold discourse of love.
Virtue and courtesy adorn the one,
With modesty and prudence in her train ;
Beauty and lively elegance the other,
With every winning grace to do her honour :
And I, thanks to my sweet and sovereign lord,
Enamoured of the two, their slave remain.
Beauty and virtue each address the mind,
And doubts express if loyal heart can rest
Between the two, in perfect love divided.
The fountain of true eloquence replies,
'Both may be loved : beauty, to yield delight ;
And virtue, to excite to generous deeds.'

ROBERTSON OF BRIGHTON.

THERE are few more remarkable phenomena in literary history than the extraordinary popularity and success that have attended the sermons of the late Frederick Robertson of Brighton. Their influence in this country is an immense and an increasing influence. Though they hardly reach the lower strata of readers, their teaching has been most effective on the minds of those who greatly influence the minds of others. Very few novels or works of *belles lettres* have enjoyed so great a circulation. From time to time a volume has been put forth without any flourish of trumpets, and with very gradual recognition by the contemporary press, and silently it passes into edition after edition. We are glad to learn that they have proved a mine of wealth to his family. The Tauchnitz edition has been extensively circulated on the Continent, and, from the absence of copyright in sermons, in this country as well. Perhaps, however, their success has been greatest in America. We have heard it estimated on competent authority that the name of Robertson is only less honoured and familiar through the United States than the name of Washington. It is very remarkable that there is an absence of any merely literary element in his work. He very rarely laid himself out for composition, and when he did so, his success was not conspicuous. To say the truth, his analysis of *In Memoriam* is, we think, very poor and inadequate. Only a few of the famous

sermons had much pains taken with them. Of the whole mass, only about eighteen were left by himself prepared for the press. The remainder are from his own notes and outlines, or from notes preserved by his friends. No doubt a great deal of the peculiar charm of his sermons is due to these special circumstances. There is an absence of all verbiage. The charm depends on the thought, and not on the diction, though the thought is often expressed in the highest, severest, and yet most unconscious literary forms. It is sometimes the kind of writing which we should expect if sermons could be preached by telegraph. In rugged sinewy strength, in acute suggestiveness, there is nothing like them. They are in their way eloquent, learned, refined; but in learning, eloquence, grandeur, they may be easily surpassed by many pulpit classics. The great secret of their success lies in their marvellous vitality. They are all thrown off in a white heat. They are absolutely fearless and outspoken. They are wrung from the depths of the preacher's own heart. They show the broadest and most catholic sympathies. They connect all the problems of mind with the teachings of theology. Sermons like these can no more go out of date than the *Paradise Lost* in one province of the human mind, or Newton's *Principia* in another.

Most of Robertson's printed sermons were preached in Trinity Chapel, Brighton. In ecclesiastical architecture the chapel was beneath

contempt. There were the heavy galleries, the hired pews or pens, the old-established 'three-decker,' which is the scorn of the ecclesiologist. But the surroundings exactly suited Robertson. His tall imposing figure in the centre of the crowd filled every eye and touched every imagination. The pale diseased face kindled with fire and feeling. His impassioned words, full of intense, yet restrained, emotion, had the profound charm which belonged to Bishop Wilberforce, and still belongs to Mr. Gladstone. As another great preacher has, within our knowledge, said of himself—with each sermon he actually parted with so much of his life. He put his whole soul into his work. He had no *arrière pensée*. He owned no part of his time or allegiance to any other form of intellectual life. He stood forth as a prophet, declaring his message to men, whether they would hear or whether they would forbear. The scroll below his bust at Brasenose College appropriately quotes: 'The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise Thee.' It is not too much to say that for the well-dressed fashionable mob which filled his church, in his sensitive morbid mind, he felt not a little contempt. He loathed and hated the idea of being a popular preacher. Only gradually he came to understand—if, indeed, he ever did understand—the existence of a wealth of affection and appreciation towards himself. In his six years at Brighton he attained to a somewhat sudden and entirely magnificent efflorescence of genius. He lived more intensely in his six years at Brighton than in all the rest of his life. Hitherto he had lived in a subordinate position; he had moved in conventional grooves; he had been under the shadow of

various controlling influences. In his Brighton sermons he summed up and included all that was best in his teachings at Winchester and Cheltenham, and the short stay at Oxford. When he went to Brighton he did so under the intense and verified impression that his days were numbered, and that his career was to be a short one. His bays, such as they were, from the first were mingled with the cypress. Though by no means averse to the pleasures of general society, as might be erroneously inferred from Mr. Stopford Brooke's biography, he was to a great extent a lonely, miscomprehended, and even an unhappy man. He looked upon himself as a comparative failure; and in his wildest dreams, if he ever permitted himself to indulge in such, he would have had no faintest gleam of the vision of his enduring fame and service. The whole strength of his faculties, the entire relief of his nature, lay in his pulpit-work. He also gave great attention to his *Letters*, of which he seems to have designed to publish a collection, and which he probably regarded as a province of his pulpit-work. He gathered up the whole of his resources in this kind of work, and cast all his thoughts into permanent forms. When he died there was probably very little unsaid that he would desire to say. His death, under peculiar and distressing circumstances, gave a seal and consecration to his teaching. It might be said of him as of the Roman Emperor, 'Felix etiam opportunitate mortis.'

There have been few theological works that contain so little theology. Robertson had been a great deal among the theologians, and the more he knew them the less he liked them. He had once been even a party Evangelical, so far

as so eminently fair a mind could have been attached to a party; and showed towards the party he had quitted a positive rancour, so far as so loving a spirit could be susceptible of rancour. He was one who would recast the whole terminology of religion, so that no worn phrases or technical terms should weary the ears of his auditors. He always appealed to the most simple, permanent, and universal principles of humanity. His mind was naturally impatient of forms and formulas. It may be said that Robertson and his critics were often looking at the same truths from different points of view. There was a boldness of speculation about him for which many worthy orthodox people have little sympathy or tolerance. But the very points which have made Robertson objectionable to so many readers of sermon literature have made him so eminently fresh and unhackneyed to the general reader. It is thus that he has gained his enormous area of usefulness. He has reached myriads who would never come within the range of the ordinary average sermon. Every cultivated man who studies the intellectual forces of our age, their character and tendency, necessarily acquaints himself with Robertson's writings. There is an unconscious influence about these sermons which is in itself most beneficent. We have repeatedly heard it said at Brighton that no one was ever brought within the range of his personal influence without being the better for it. This is also the case with the readers of his sermons. The absolute passionate love of truth is ever eminently bracing and healthful. Even where Robertson's speculations broke away from the main stream of Christian thought the value and originality of his

ideas are now everywhere admitted; and much that was once thought crude and daring is now accepted as truisms in theology. It is sad to think that even in the present day some of the first truths in Christian charity have yet to be impressed on the intelligence and carried out in practice. Robertson sedulously inculcated these. What he earnestly sought for was reality—the reality of Life and Love.

Let us endeavour to analyse this striking literary phenomenon, to ascertain the secret of this extraordinary success. This great genius founded no school and left no successor, but, what came to the same thing, he administered to thousands an extraordinary intellectual and spiritual stimulus. We are fortunately able to study his sermons in the light of his *Life and Letters*, and the two sets of volumes shed mutual illustration upon each other. So great was the charm of his oratory that several of his hearers have told us that they never exactly appreciated his point of view and the substance of his teaching until they had the printed volumes before them. His was a rare combination of earnestness and genius, of passion and of power. His loyalty to sincerity was absolute. As he once said, 'Truth is the first thing necessary, and truth is the second thing necessary, and truth is the third thing necessary.' We are afraid that his was not a happy life. The evangel which he proclaimed was that of joy and peace, but with joy and peace he had very little acquaintance. He had to work 'within his limitations.' He thus speaks of the 'thorn in the flesh' in words true of himself and of manifold human experience: 'Some domestic incongruity, some family unhappiness which a man may

forget at his labour, in his shop, in the field; but the time comes when he must go home, and there is the thorn awaiting him. Some habit of mind that comes in solitude, which in the midst of society we may perhaps forget, but when we are *alone* we feel that the thorn is there still.' Those who know much of Robertson's personal history are aware that there were many untoward circumstances in his private life that would go some way in explaining his restlessness and unhappiness. Mr. Stopford Brooke's volumes tell us much, but there is also much which they do not tell. His real life has never been fully written, and perhaps never will be. With all our admiration for him, we still think we detect a flaw in his nature. Other men's lives have been cast in an equally unfavourable framework of outward circumstances, but their lives have been not unhappy. But no conceivable set of circumstances would have altogether suited Robertson. With the possession of genius he had its eccentricities and aberrations. There is also an intense self-consciousness that often reminds us of Byron or of Keats. His accomplishments were of a very various and extraordinary kind. He never introduces them for the sake of display; only in the curtest and least pretentious way, for the sake of illustrating his subject. His French and German were excellent. He wrote Greek in a way that elicited the admiration of one of the best Greek scholars of the day. He had a great love of natural science, such as chemistry and physical geography. His memory was extraordinarily good. He knew by heart large portions of the Greek Testament, and could repeat the whole of Dante's *Inferno*. He studied carefully all the leading

subjects of the day, reading them up carefully in the authorities in a way that would shame many a public writer and member of Parliament. He took up some very difficult subjects, not in a conventional or even literary way, but mastering and assimilating them thoroughly. All these varied powers and accomplishments were valuable to him, as they enriched his pulpit work. Thus thoroughly equipped, he descended into the arena with the courage of the athlete and the devotion of the martyr.

One great secret of Robertson's success is the thorough wholeness with which he threw himself into a subject. We find there are thoughts which are uppermost in his mind and are emerging on every opportunity. There was one subject especially on which he thought what are the thoughts of many minds, and because he expressed them so truly and fearlessly there are countless minds that vibrate with his own. One of these was that subject of religious doubt, the most unhappy and persistent element of the present age. No one can study Robertson's life and works without perceiving that there was a time, and probably many more times than one, when he himself trembled on the borders of positive unbelief. He worked his way free from these murky shadows, and there is reason to believe that in his latest, and in some senses his best days, Faith was more and more strengthening its hold upon his heart. This is a subject with which he deals in his sermons, about which he writes in his letters, which he introduced into his public lectures to the Brighton workpeople, and which he frequently discussed in his conversation. It is because he looked at the subject from

every point of view, and sympathised with each order of mind, and had himself passed through each shade of experience, that men have so highly valued his teaching both on the intellectual and on the spiritual side. It was on this subject that Robertson spoke with a high unfaltering tone, with that final decided tone which many men so love to hear, and which brings infinite relief to their minds. We are not certain, indeed, that Robertson's analysis of doubt is exhaustive, and that he might not have proceeded a step further in a liberal direction. Robertson says, 'All doubt comes from living out of habits of affectionate obedience to God. Let a man be religious and irreligious at intervals—irregular, inconsistent, without some distinct thing to live for—it is a matter of impossibility that he can be free from doubts. He must make up his mind for a dark life. Doubts can only be dispelled by that kind of active life that realises Christ.' Doubt is the meeting-ground, however, both of religious and irreligious minds. If men of unruled lives often lapse into doubt, and even greedily seek out reasons for a state of scepticism, it is also true that men of the noblest character, men *mentis naturaliter Christianæ*, have often suffered intensely from cruel torturing questionings. There is no greater happiness than that of those over whose minds the cold shade of unbelief has never passed. Here is a noble passage on the subject, which concludes a sermon entitled 'Obedience the Organ of Spiritual Knowledge.' He is formally repeating what he said in lecture, letter, and conversation. 'There are hours, and they come to us all at some period of life or other, when the hand of mystery seems to lie heavy on the soul, when

some life-shock scatters existence, leaves it a blank and dreary waste henceforth for ever, and there appears nothing of hope in all the expanse that stretches out, except that merciful gate of death which opens at the end. Then the man whose faith rested on outward authority and not on inward life will find it give way. The authority of the priest; the authority of the Church; or merely the authority of a document proved by miracles and backed by prophecy; the soul—conscious life hereafter—God—will be an awful desolate Perhaps. Well, in such moments you doubt all—whether Christianity be true, whether Christ was man or God or a beautiful fable. You ask bitterly, like Pontius Pilate, "What is truth?" In such an hour what remains? I reply, obedience. Leave these thoughts for the present. Act, be merciful and gentle, honest; force yourself to abound in little services; try to do good to others; be true to the duty that you know—that must be right, whatever else be uncertain. And by all the laws of the human heart, by the word of God, you shall not be left to doubt. Do that much of the will of God which is plain to you, and you shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' It would be easy to cite passages in Robertson's correspondence which lay down Duty as the central principle of his life and writing. He was powerfully impressed by the obedience of the brave men who went down in orderly ranks in the Birkenhead. He preached a sermon on the subject, and Maurice also thus referred to the Birkenhead in one of his lectures on 'The Conscience': 'It was their business to go to the bottom, and to the bottom they went.' Robertson always looked on the principle

of obedience as the best point in the character of Englishmen. In one of his letters he says: 'I do love and honour my dear old country with all my heart and soul; her sons cannot sing, paint, nor carve, but they can die at their posts silently, without thinking that "forty centuries were looking down upon them from the Pyramids."'

Exactly the same thought appears in a passage of unrivalled eloquence and splendour in a speech which he delivered before an association of working men. At Brighton the old women of both sexes regarded Robertson as a demagogue. He was considered a Christian Socialist of the type of Maurice, only of a deeper dye. It was commonly imputed to him that he made Liberty, Equality, Fraternity the subjects of his teaching. Robertson unaffectedly loved the working man, and took up his cause when it had not begun to be a fashionable affectation. He was one of the first of the clergy in Brighton, if not the very first, who openly sympathised and fraternised with the *ouvrière* class. We have ourselves spoken with working men who came under his influence, and testified how great his influence was. His object was not to flatter the people, but to serve them. There was a kind of civil war in the institution which he had formed and fostered, on the question whether sceptical publications should be admitted into the library, and whether honorary members should be allowed to have any share in the management of affairs. He argued that members of the upper classes who subscribed should have vote and voice, and he was strongly against the admission of sceptical works into the library. We think that the ground which he occupied in his argument on

this subject is untenable. He considered that a minority had no right to procure books which would be distasteful to a majority. He appears, however, to be tampering with the rights of a minority, rights which are often in a parlous state. The idea of a public library is not only to have books which will suit every one, but also that every one will find the special books that will suit him. The point, however, is of no practical moment. The institution fell to pieces soon after Robertson's time. The British workman enjoys a pot of beer and a penny newspaper beyond any fine literature that could be provided for him. In the course of his speech Robertson spoke with great sympathy and critical power of the scepticism of Shelley, but, we suspect, rather to the bewilderment of the average Brighton working man. And then occurs this splendid passage, harmonising with those which we have already quoted, and which can hardly be excelled in any literature: 'But there is a state called infidelity, which deserves compassion rather than indignation; the dreadful state of one who craves light, and cannot find it. I do think the way we treat that state is most unpardonably cruel. It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all; when it begins to feel the nothingness of many of the traditional opinions which have been received with implicit confidence, and in that horrible insecurity begins also to doubt whether there be anything to believe at all. It is an awful hour—let him who has passed through it say how awful—when this life has lost its meaning, and seems

shrivelled into a span; when the grave appears to be the end of all, human goodness nothing but a name, and the sky above this universe a dead expanse, black with the void from which God Himself has disappeared. In that fearful loneliness of spirit, when those who should have been his friends and counsellors only frown upon his misgivings, and profanely bid him stifle doubts, which, for aught he knows, may arise from the fountain of truth itself, to extinguish as a glare from hell that which, for aught he knows, may be light from heaven, and everything seems wrapped in hideous uncertainty, I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scathless: it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still—the grand, simple landmarks of morality. In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God and no future state, yet, even then, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than be a coward. Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed is he who, when all is drear and cheerless within and without, when his teachers terrify him and his friends shrink from him, has obstinately clung to moral good—thrice blessed, because *his* night shall pass into clear bright day.

‘I appeal to the recollection of any man who has passed through that hour of agony, and stood upon the rock at last, the surges stilled below him, and the last cloud drifted from the sky above, with a faith, and hope, and trust

no longer traditional, but of his own—a trust which neither earth nor hell shall shake thenceforth for ever. But it is not in this way generally that men act who are tempted by doubt. Generally, the step from doubt is a reckless plunge into sensuality. Then comes the darkening of the moral being; and then from uncertainty and scepticism it may be that the path lies unobstructed sheer down into atheism. But if there be one on earth who deserves compassion, it is the sincere, earnest, and—may I say it without risk of being misunderstood?—honest doubter. Let who will denounce him, I will not. I would stand by his side, and say, “Courage, my brother! You are darkening your own soul; you are contradicting the meaning of your own existence. But God is your Father, and an Infinite Spirit seeks to mingle itself with yours.”’

Another great charm about Robertson is his preëminent clearness. There is always eminent lucidity both in his thought and expression. His mind was thoroughly logical, keen, and clear. He was a great admirer both of Carlyle and Maurice. But he carefully avoided the mannerisms, the vagueness of thought, the eccentricities of style that belonged to these two great men. Robertson laboured assiduously to get the clearest conception of his thought, and present it in the very clearest way. We venture to say that if Carlyle and Maurice had adopted the same thoroughly English method, their influence would have been tenfold, and their circulation a hundredfold. High as is their place in contemporary thought, it has been obtained, not by reason of, but in spite of, their faults—*les défauts de ses qualités*. Robertson possesses an incomparable lucidity.

Every subject had again and again been turned over in his own mind, thoroughly fused with his own being. We are satisfied that he must have again and again recast his material, until he had gathered the exact shape and form which would win the readiest admission to the heart and intelligence of his hearers. Hence the undying interest of what we have recorded, imperfect as it is.

Another remarkable characteristic which certainly had a great charm for many laymen, and to that extent enlarged the area of his usefulness, was his remarkable freedom from all theological party ties. 'I have almost done with divinity,' he wrote, 'dogmatic divinity—that is, except to lovingly endeavour to make out the truth which lies beneath this or that poor dogma, miserably overlaid as marble fonts are with whitewash.' Such language may be all very well for an inquiring layman; but it sounds oddly enough on the lips of an ordained teacher of revealed truth. It would be interesting to know what are the 'poor dogmas' to which he was referring. He would declare that he was unfit for ministerial work. 'More and more I feel that I am not a minister, and never can be one.' Again he writes: 'For the rich I am neither mentally nor morally qualified. There is something either in my manner, language, or tone of thought, which they will not brook; and then I have not calmness of nerve or meekness enough to prevent being agitated, and treating this in return with pride and coldness.' Little could he have imagined that every fragment of his teaching would have been deemed of priceless value, and that he would have commanded a larger auditory than any other preacher of the age. Again he says, in words which have cer-

tainly not lost their power at the present time: 'Alas, alas! when I see Romanists cursing the Church of England, Evangelicals shaking their heads about the Christianity of Tractarians, Dissenters anathematising Unitarians, and Unitarians of the old school condemning the more spiritual ones of the new, I am forced to hope that there is more inclusiveness in the love of God than in the bitter orthodoxy of sects and churches.' The peculiar line which Robertson took up was disastrous for his own interests, but in the long-run eminently served the cause of truth and goodness. He was absolutely free from that party spirit which is the bane of the Church. No party in the Church could claim him for its own. At one time he belonged to the Low Church; but he distinctly broke away from it. The High Churchmen would gladly have adopted him, but his views on Baptism were thoroughly antagonistic to theirs. We find some difficulty in saying that he refused to be a Broad Churchman; but he was certainly never such in the sense of being a party man; and in his earnest devotion, his life of active goodness, and his intense loyalty to revealed truth, he immensely differs from a vast proportion who, for want of a distinctive name, label themselves Broad Churchmen. Now it is extremely inconvenient to a clergyman not to be labelled with a party name. Such a man does not move with the momentum of his party. He enlists few personal sympathies, and must almost abdicate any hopes of lucrative promotion. It is no man's interest to do him justice, or to seek to do him good. Robertson, all through his ministerial course, knew something, though not in a painful or exaggerated way, of the *res angustæ domi*; but his chance was remote

indeed that the dispensers of ecclesiastical patronage would do anything for him. Such a man necessarily lays himself open for much injustice and misrepresentation. But he may humbly hope that even these things are not without alloy, if men are helped to look at eternal, immutable truths instead of the human agencies through which these truths were presented; if they help to sweep away the mist of prejudices, antagonisms, and misconceptions; if they promote charity and peace among sectarians; if they present divine truths in the simplest loveliest forms without the least human admixture. 'I can tell him there are not rewards for *that* path,' writes Robertson. 'Rather let him be content to remain a partisan, and call himself by some name, Churchman, Evangelical, or Tractarian. Then he will be abused by many, but his party will defend him.'

Robertson was thoroughly modern in all his ideas. He faithfully reflected the spirit of the age in which his own lot was cast, the *Zeitgeist* of which we have heard so much. 'Pray let me have Faraday's letter back again,' he writes to a friend. 'It did me more good than blisters, morphine, quinine, steel, or anything else which they give me. Sound, genuine, healthy, scientific truth, instead of the sickly craving after mysteries and preternaturalisms that mark the idler classes now.' His view of Nature was thoroughly realistic. To him it revealed the mind of God. 'Real Nature,' he writes, 'I hold to be the great law of our life, physics being the study of Nature. I am sure that religion is the recall to real instead of perverted Nature, just as the medicinal art is the recall to natural health of body. I think natural facts are most valuable for your

minds to repose on.' 'He endeavoured,' says his biographer, 'to free himself from conventional views of art and beauty, and to keep his heart natural and pure enough to receive impressions direct from Nature, and use her as she is.'

His line of life had been of a somewhat peculiar kind. All his life long, with very brief intervals, he had been brought up in the atmosphere of watering-places. His ministerial experience, with the exception of brief seasons at Winchester and Oxford, had been cast in these places. It is a peculiar life, one of refinement and fashion, and always assures to men of culture and power a sympathetic auditory. Had his lot been cast in some quiet country parish, where his rustic people would not have paused for a moment to criticise the quality of his sermons, or in some immense town parish, where his time would have been absorbed in practical work, we may venture to believe that his fretted nerves would have been spared and his life prolonged. On the other hand, he would scarcely have produced such permanent and fertilising work. There are many clergymen, we believe, to whom a pulpit in a watering-place is the very height of professional ambition. The chapel is made as comfortable as a drawing-room. The place is full of odours, lights, and subdued tones and colours. The portrait is in the shop-windows. There is a perfect shower of three-cornered notes. The popular preacher is a great man at afternoon tea, greater at dinner, and greatest of all at an evening party. To this order of paltry temptations, to which even great minds are exposed, Robertson was absolutely insensible. His real greatness was balanced by his real humility. He

did not greatly care for the gay, bright, fashionable watering-place where he found himself. 'I do dislike Brighton; but it is my present sphere, and I must make the best of it. The ministry is nowhere a bed of roses. I wish I did not hate preaching so much, but the degradation of being a Brighton preacher is almost intolerable. . . . As I sat inactive in the afternoon, and gazing on the dense crowd before me, I felt humbled exceedingly to think I had to address those numbers every week twice, and that their spiritual life depended, for those two hours at least, speaking humanly, on me. How wonderful the opportunity, and how heavy the responsibility! Brighton has the disadvantages of Cheltenham. It is excitable, and the floating portions of society are superficial. I find nothing seducing in popularity, and would gladly, joyously, give it all up to-morrow for a calmer life.' To such a society as this the teaching of Robertson came with the tremendous force of a great prophetic burden. There was something withering in the tremendous denunciations which he uttered against those who, in a selfish isolation, forgot the claims and unhappiness of the poor. 'How passing strange that mystery of suffering is! and how questionable the right which two-thirds of the world assume to themselves of filling their ears with cotton, that the means may not break in upon their silken repose, and that the cry of the toiling thousands may float by on the blast unheard! But suppose that the cry goes up to the ear of God, and He asks, "Whom did you relieve? whom did you clothe? whom did you feed with your tens, hundreds, or thousands?" Assuredly, protest against Kingsley who will, he stood on a deep awful truth:

"God will yet take account of the selfishness of wealth; and His quarrel has yet to be fought out." 'She was rather puzzled when I asked her whether it were legitimate to preach from James v. 1: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl." 'A life of amusement and visiting seems to me in irreconcilable antagonism to Christianity, and more destructive to the higher spirit than even the mercantile life in its worst form.' 'They tell me that it is impossible for one in the vortex of London society to stop; that at last a single evening at home is intolerably *ennuyeux*. I partly believe it, and can only say that, if it be so, it kills body and soul.'

It will be interesting to bring together some further characteristics and incidents of the famous teaching at Trinity Chapel. He was intensely natural, human—very human indeed. He does not magnify his office; at least, on one occasion we find him writing, 'Sermons are crutches; I believe often the worst things for spiritual health that ever were invented.' The old pulpit is still there where he preached, and the same old Bible and old cushion. A lady told him of the delight and tears of gratitude which she had witnessed in a poor girl to whom in passing he gave a kind look when going out of church. 'What a lesson!' wrote Robertson. 'How cheaply happiness can be given! What opportunities we miss of doing an angel's work! I remember doing it, full of sad feelings, passing on, and thinking no more about it.' Robertson strove to be unconscious in the pulpit, as do most earnest teachers; but he could not help being most keenly sensitive to appreciation or the lack of appreciation in his hearers. He was greatly pained when an old lady told him that she in-

tended to leave Trinity. He strongly recommended her to go if she wanted to; but he wrote, 'How long will the rest remain? I shall be alone, as I expected years ago. This desertion, one by one, is painful.' He proceeded to remonstrate with the lady in a tone which many of our great authors and teachers might assume to themselves. 'I told her that there was one thing of which she could not deprive me—the certainty of having done her much good; that, having listened for years with reliance and trust, the truths of feeling and life which I have taught must have mixed with her life, cannot be separated from her being, must grow and produce a harvest which I shall claim hereafter as my harvest, and of which no power in the universe can rob me.'

There were many people who catechised and criticised him. We take an incident from Mr. Brooke's *Life*: 'One Monday an elderly gentleman introduced himself as having been of great service to young clergymen. He arraigned the sermon he had heard in Trinity Chapel the day before; spoke of dangerous views and the impetuosity of young men; offered himself as a weekly monitor, and enumerated, in conclusion, the perils and inconveniences to which popular preachers were subject. Mr. Robertson, who had remained silent, at last rose: "Really, sir," he said sternly, "the only inconvenience I have experienced in being what you are pleased to call me, a popular preacher, is intrusion like the present;" and he bowed his censor out.' The worst of it was that though he habitually lived in a region of his own high thoughts, the little wounds did not fail to tingle and fester.

The last volume of the series is peculiarly interesting; in some

respects, indeed, it is the most interesting of the whole. It is edited by his son, Mr. Charles Boyd Robertson, who dates from the Legation, Stuttgart. It gives us, what we have not had before, some of the sermons preached at Cheltenham and Oxford. The sermons distinctly show, in opposition to a prevalent impression, that there is no break of spiritual and intellectual continuity between the years at Brighton and the years that went before. Indeed, the first sermon, preached at Cheltenham, and which gives its name to the volume,* will favourably compare with anything later, both for eloquence, force, and originality. It is, perhaps, a shade more orthodox, a shade more in accordance with the conventionalities of the pulpit. There is something particularly interesting in the 'autograph notes.' We find ourselves admitted into the study of the divine—into the studio of the artist. In some of these notes there is something that is strictly autobiographical. He puts down in his notes something that struck him forcibly at the time, but which we are not so clear that he used in his sermons. Here is a passage where he is evidently drawing upon his own experiences: 'Go and stand by a field at night. Men are asleep; no light in yon cottage. But growth and motion are in that field, and more rapidly by night than by day. We learn even when we are doing nothing—contemplating, suffering. Our souls do not rest any more than our bodies. Hearts beat out their life-pulses while asleep. There comes a solemn feeling at moonlight, by the seaside, or by Schaff-

* *The Human Race, and other Sermons.* Preached at Cheltenham, Oxford, and Brighton. By the late Rev. Frederick W. Robertson. Second edition. (C. Kegan Paul & Co. 1881.)

hausen. The spirit of the universe moving on! Mighty pulse!' In the following passage he draws what, with little alteration, might be a summary of his own life: 'The young man forms ideals of excellence for himself—only by degrees does he appreciate Christ. Dazzled by military life, he wishes to fall in a cavalry charge; he knows nothing higher, till the time comes when he begins to feel that to save men's lives is better than to destroy life. His next ideal may be intellectual superiority. He dreams of eloquence, and thinks it dazzling to hold a senate still. To be an orator, retaining a thousand men as one, eyes speaking to eyes, heart to heart—the dominion of mind! But this is shared by base and bad men. Or it may be his ideal is the ascetic life. This is a temptation to ardent hearts. Many now go to Rome for this reason; but, after all, it is a useless life, and a refined form of selfishness. Then the man turns to Christ. He finds in Him, not the warrior, but "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Not the man of intellect, but "Become as a little child." Not the ascetic, but a man found in common life, at the marriage feast of Cana, in the loving family of Bethany. Words cannot express the awe with which a man contemplates that character when it is understood. This is the true heroic, this is the only God-like, this the real divine. From all types of human excellence I have made my choice for life and death—Christ.'

Mr. Robertson's works not only comprise his sermons, but to a considerable extent also his Bible lectures in the afternoons. Any one acquainted with the details of clerical life will know that teaching of this kind is very significant respecting the nature and relations

of a clergyman and his congregation. It is the kind of teaching which involves the greatest amount of labour, and, so far as visible results are concerned, the smallest amount of return. There is much less scope for oratory and effect. But no work is more solid and permanent in the long-run. When pulpit and pew work harmoniously together in this direction it is a proof that it is no case of oratory and tickled ears, but a case of definite, careful instruction. That so much of Robertson's work was of this kind would alone remove him from the category of watering-place orators. He himself seems to have attached a higher degree of importance to expository teaching. 'The sermon,' he writes, 'was hortatory and practical; the lecture was didactic. The first appealed rather to the heart and to the conscience; the second rather to the intellect and the analytic faculty.' We have two volumes of Robertson's teaching of this kind; one volume is on the book of Genesis, the other on the Epistles to the Corinthians. There were further series of Old Testament and New Testament subjects, but of these nothing has been preserved. In commencing his lectures on Genesis, he says, 'There is something solemn in a commencement because it reminds us of a close. Twice have I begun and twice have I finished a book here. Twice have I reminded you that many present at the beginning of my lectures would never live to hear their termination. Again and again has this prediction been fulfilled.' Many of Robertson's most remarkable sayings lie embedded in these lectures. Here is one of them: 'There is no other sin but selfishness. The agriculturist distinguishes between two sorts of roots—those which go deep down into the ground with-

out dividing, and those which divide off into endless fibres and roots. Selfishness is like the latter kind; it is the great root of sin from which others branch out.' Here is a very characteristic passage: 'The blessed spots of earth are not those which at first sight seem so. The land of olive and vine is often the land of sensuality and indolence. Wealth accumulates and engenders sloth and the evils which follow in the train of luxury. The land of clouds and fogs and unkindly soil, which will not yield its fruit unless to hard toil, is the land of perseverance, manhood, domestic virtue, and stately and pure manners. Want of food and of the necessities of life, I had well-nigh said that these things are not an ill, when I see what they teach; I had well-nigh said I do not pity the poor man. There are evils worse than famine. What is the real misfortune of life? Sin or want of food? Sickiness or selfishness?'

In the recent volumes of correspondence of Bishop Thirlwall, there is a very interesting reference to Robertson: 'I must now acknowledge a debt which I owe you, but of which you would not otherwise be aware. It was from you that I heard of Robertson's *Life and Letters*; and but for the way in which you spoke of them, I believe I should not have thought of ordering them, for I had been rather disappointed by the *Sermons* which I had happened to open. They gave me the idea of something crude and unfinished, which rather repelled me. And then I knew nothing whatever of the man. Only conceive that when I was introduced to him by Archdeacon Hare, I fancied that he was a Dissenting minister! But the *Letters* are among the most interesting I have ever read; and the insight which they open

into so fine and powerful a mind, and so noble a character, is what no sermon could give. That which I felt as an imperfection in the form of the *Sermons*—a necessary consequence of the way in which they were dictated from memory—is just what gives the highest charm of perfect freedom and natural effusion to the *Letters*. . . . In the *Letters* hardly any really important question of such a nature as agitated the public mind escapes notice and discussion. . . . It is altogether a melancholy and really tragic history; for one cannot help seeing that the very same elements in his constitution, mental and physical, which gave his mind its peculiar strength, and his character its peculiar energy, also created the moodiness which embittered, darkened, and shortened his life. The sphere in which he moved was really one in which he was at least as useful, and might have been as happy, as in any other, if he could only have seen it in its true light.'

From some points of view the Bishop's criticisms are not worth much. It is singular that so omnivorous a reader should only have 'happened to open them.' It is singular that so critical a reader should have failed to see that in a somewhat disguised, though in more careful and finished forms, we have in the sermons all that was most valuable and impressive in the letters. But the Bishop is quite right in speaking of the morbidity of his character. Indeed, the suspicion is suggested that an unsuspected alloy of weakness had for years existed in that noble intellect. The idea was firmly rooted in his mind that his work at Cheltenham was thoroughly wasted and thrown away. It was this feeling which, when he had surrendered his post at Cheltenham, drove

him almost in an agony of despair into the Tyrol. Yet nothing is plainer than that his work at Cheltenham was in a way exceedingly effective. He clung to his afternoon congregation, and they clung to him. When his vicar went away for his holiday, he greatly preferred keeping on in the old way to taking the morning pulpit at the fashionable church. There are many persons whose minds are so curiously constructed, that if they recognise greatness in a favourite preacher, they fail to recognise greatness in any other preacher who may succeed him. There was a time when Edward Irving was assistant to Dr. Chalmers; and because Chalmers was a great man, many of his hearers could not appreciate the fact that Irving was also a great man. So, many of the Cheltenham people, in the presence of the popular and eloquent vicar, Mr. Boyd, could hardly believe in the surpassing excellence and genius of the curate. But I have myself met with those who were intimate with Robertson in those days, and who assure me that he knew a number of persons who were devotedly attached to him, and warmly appreciated his work. This he could not understand. Here is an obviously erroneous calculation of his: 'As to our "incomparable Church," why, it does not require a prophetic spirit to see that in ten years more she must be in fragments.' He goes on to say very grandly, but, at the same time, very morbidly, 'I am alone now, and shall be till I die; and I am not afraid to be alone in the majesty of darkness, which His presence peoples with a crowd. I ask now no sympathy but His. . . I am alone, lonelier than ever—sympathised with by none, because I sympathise too much with all. But the All sym-

pathises with me.' And all this time there was an immense amount of fervid sympathy clinging to him on the part of the ever-widening circle of his friends and hearers. He could only see in his crowded audience people who came to listen to him, and sneer, and criticise, 'as if he were a stump orator.'

'Lord, a man should have the fine point of his soul taken off to become fit for this world!' wrote poor Keats. What Lord Houghton eloquently said of Keats is very true of Robertson. 'I had to show that Keats in his intellectual character revered truth and simplicity above all things, and abhorred whatever was merely strange and strong; that he was ever learning, and ever growing more conscious of his own ignorance; that his earnestness in aiming at excellence was only equal to his humble estimation of his own efforts; that his course was one of distinct and positive progress. I had to exhibit the moral peculiarities as the effects of a strong will, passionate temperament, indomitable courage, and a somewhat contemptuous disregard of other men; how love of pleasure was in him continually subordinate to higher aspirations.' His sensitiveness was as great as that of Keats. Moreover, he had, like Keats, a thorough basis of good sense, which told him that his morbid sensitiveness was wrong. The same faculties which in Keats took the form of poetry, in Robertson took the form of oratory. There was an immense deal of the poet about Robertson. This is shown by his lectures on poetry, and by his unfinished discussion of the poetry of Wordsworth. Most of all it is shown by his own brilliant and impressive imagery, which has many of the highest qualities of poetry.

There is something also that is very analogous in the circumstances of their decease. It seems to have been the same fell disease that happened to each; falling in the one case on the lungs, and in the other on the brain. A most significant circumstance befell each of them. One night poor Keats gave a slight cough and said, 'That is blood from my mouth. Bring me a candle; let me see this blood.' Then looking at it, he said, with the utmost calmness, 'I know the colour of that blood; it is arterial blood. I cannot be deceived in that colour; that drop is my death-warrant. I must die.' An equally significant circumstance befell Robertson. A member of his congregation, a chemist, asked him to look at his galvanic apparatus. He took the ends of the wire, completed the circuit, experiencing the tingling. He then held the end of the wire to the back of the head and neck, without a single sensation being elicited. Then he touched the forehead for a second. 'Instantly a crashing pain shot through, as if my skull was stove in, and a bolt of fire were burning through and through.' In the same letter he writes, 'My work is done.' Some hope might have been entertained if he could have had a curate to help him with his work. But the then Vicar of Brighton, rather an unsympathetic man, refused to let him have the curate on whom his heart was set. So he sank, unrelieved, into death. The dark secrets of the hospital and of torture hardly reveal greater suffering than Robertson endured in those last hours. When they sought to change his position, he said, 'I cannot bear it; let me rest. I must die. Let God do His work.' These were his last words.

He was only thirty-seven years

of age when he died; an age when he had not reached the climacteric of his powers, or the full development of his character and views. He was in that eager progressive stage of intellectual life in which some of his opinions had, perhaps, hardly crystallised into definite forms, and from which ampler fruit might yet have been expected. The work which he has actually achieved is very great. His works consist of some eight volumes of sermons, expositions, and lectures; or, if we add, as we fairly may, his correspondence, of some nine or ten volumes. It is an interesting circumstance that, after his death, an inhabitant of Brighton, who had stood aloof from his teaching during his lifetime, read his sermons, and was so struck with the beauty of his teaching, that in gratitude he placed a marble bust of the great preacher in the Pavilion. Those who have not yet acquainted themselves with the writings of Robertson may be exhorted to repair the omission. They will find in them a whole treasure of ethical and spiritual truth, which will not fail to act as a rare intellectual stimulus. Nor will they fail to be entranced with the personal character of Robertson himself. He was one of the most soldierly of the soldiers of the Cross; it was always his passion to be a soldier, and he always evidenced this in his straightforwardness, his devotion to duty and obedience, and his dauntless intrepidity. Nor will they fail to be touched with the exquisite graces which he has engrafted on the substance of his teaching; the fancy which so reminds us of Keats; the sensitive womanly tenderness that shines through the journals of Eugénie de Guérin.

HALF-HOURS WITH SOME OLD AMBASSADORS.

V.

TALLEYRAND, PRINCE OF DIPLOMATISTS.

No name is more conspicuous in the annals of European diplomacy than that of Charles Maurice Talleyrand de Périgord, for some time Bishop of Autun, and afterwards Prince of Benevento. With the single exception of Napoleon, he engrossed at one period a greater share of the world's attention than any other person. He was in all respects a very remarkable man, and from his first precocious moments down to his death, in his eighty-fourth year, he exhibited an almost unequalled devotion to the interests of one person—that person being himself. A libertine in his youth, he pursued a life of self-indulgence until long past middle age; and yet he never allowed his pleasures to interfere with his ambitions, which were always of a grand and imposing type. If we are to believe half the stories related of his youth, Don Juan appears to have been quite a mild individual compared with Talleyrand, and a novice in the arts of gallantry and intrigue.

The Prince has been represented as a mischievous child, an insubordinate schoolboy, a precocious libertine, a dissolute priest, with no respect for the sanctities of domestic life, and as one who voluntarily threw himself into the vortex of all the intrigues which agitated Paris and Versailles during the five years that preceded the convocation of the States-General. He had always the happy and profitable instinct of

discovering each day which way the wind would blow next. Hence the extraordinary chances and changes of his career. He was in succession—and a somewhat rapid succession—a courtier at court, an economist with the economists, a patriot at the revolutionary clubs, a supporter of Napoleon, and the friend of his successor. It is really remarkable to note how, in the most stormy period of French history, when cliques and parties went down one after another, and became engulfed in oblivion, the clever and astute Talleyrand invariably managed to come up to the surface.

Talleyrand was born at Paris, in the year 1754. He was descended from one of the oldest and most illustrious houses of France, and the principality of Chalais is said to have been for eight centuries in this family. By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, the fortunes of the Périgords were anything but equivalent to their rank. Charles Maurice, being lame from his birth, was deprived of his rights by a family council, and the privileges of the eldest son were conferred upon Count Archambaud, the son of the Count Talleyrand de Périgord by a second marriage. The future statesman was destined from the outset to the ecclesiastical profession. His first tutor is alleged to have early discovered in him an ardent propensity to vice, and also to gluttony. So much trouble and anxiety did he

cause his guardians, that it is further stated the King granted a *lettre de cachet*, by which young Talleyrand was apprehended at a gaming-house in the month of October 1770, and conveyed instantly to the Bastille, under the nickname of the *Abbé Boiteux*, or lame priest. He was afterwards transferred to the state prison of Vincennes, where he remained for a whole year. But in spite of his numerous indiscretions, the young student made his mark by his ability at the Seminary of St. Sulpice, where he was educated. In 1773 he received ordination in the Gallican Church, though he never made any secret of his extreme dislike to the sacred calling which had been chosen for him.

The witty and brilliant young ecclesiastic was not long in finding himself on the way to preferment. He lived all through his life, as it were, in a coruscation of *bons mots*, and it was to one of these witticisms—and a not very refined one—that he owed his first advancement. Having been introduced to Madame du Barry, the mistress of Louis XV., whose parties were not the most favourable to the development of the higher moral qualities, he was on one occasion noticed to be sad and silent. Being questioned by his hostess as to the reason for this, he replied, '*Hélas, madame, je faisais une réflexion bien triste.*' 'And what is that?' 'Ah, madame, que Paris est une ville dans laquelle il est bien plus aisé d'avoir des femmes que des abbayes.' This smart answer led at least to the creation of one abbé, for when it was reported to Louis XV. he was so pleased that he made Talleyrand Abbé de Périgord. While holding the sacerdotal office, Talleyrand actually fitted out a vessel as a privateer for the purpose of plundering the British, and in this

enterprise, so foreign to his cloth, he received substantial assistance in the shape of cannon from the French Government. But while thus engaged, he was not neglecting the cardinal principle of his diplomacy—the art of falsehood. In the eyes of the Abbé, lying was a trivial offence; it was detection in it only that was criminal. There are letters published which he is represented as having written to the numerous ladies with whom he carried on *liaisons*, and if he really was the author of these epistles, they show a capacity for intrigue, duplicity, and adroitness in escaping from the detection and punishment of his wickednesses which make the artifices of Boccaccio's heroes and heroines appear puerile by comparison.

But side by side with these traits, his talents for public business were also so strongly developed that in 1780 he was named agent-general for the clergy, and, in giving an account of his stewardship in this capacity some years later, he surprised everybody by the broad and statesmanlike manner in which he did it. In 1788 the bishopric of Autun became vacant; and although the kind of irregular life which Talleyrand led was no secret, it was also no secret that the Abbé looked forward to being appointed to the vacant see. For some time the King held back. Though not very particular himself, he saw that there was something incongruous in appointing a libertine to a bishopric, and that the Abbé would be a shepherd of a very peculiar order, and one not at all contemplated by the early Christians, when the order was founded. At length Louis was prevailed upon by Talleyrand's father, then upon his deathbed, to promise the bishopric for the Abbé; and on the 17th of January 1789, the erring

ecclesiastic was consecrated Bishop of Autun. We will pause here for a moment to quote a description of the Abbé as he appeared, and lived, about this time. 'Let the reader imagine,' remarks one of his biographers, 'a man of six-and-thirty, with a fine countenance, expressive blue eyes, a nose slightly turned up, and an almost deadly-pale complexion, a slightly malicious smile playing upon his lips, and imparting to them an air of disdain; careful of his person, foppish in his ecclesiastical habiliments, frequently exchanging the costume of his order for plain clothes; irreligious as a pirate, and saying mass with graceful unction. He finds time for everything; shows himself at Court, but more assiduously at the opera. Instead of his breviary, he studies the Odes of Horace and the Memoirs of Cardinal de Retz. If he meets with Narbonne, Lauzun, the Chevalier de Boufflers, Ségur junior, and the Bishop of Châlons in Mlle. de Guinard's box, he will go and sup with them. Though generally confined to his bed from indolence, it does not prevent him in case of need from spending several consecutive nights in serious matters. Dunned by his creditors, denying himself to the importunate, never making any promise without some reservation; obliging from circumstances, but sometimes through egotism; eager for fame, still more eager for the substantial gifts of Fortune; devoted to the fair sex in all except his heart; unmoved in important circumstances; proud with the great, and caressing with the humble; interrupting a report upon the finances to answer a *billet-doux*; without resentment, without malice; an enemy to all violent measures, but knowing well how to recur to them when required,—such was M. de Talleyrand at

the time of the promulgation of the civil constitution of the clergy.' A truly admirable portrait of a pastor of Christ's flock!

Talleyrand was the only bishop possessing a benefice in France who took the new oath required by the State. He did not take this step—or, indeed, any other in his life—without doubtless counting the cost. The clergy of his own diocese elected him their deputy to the States-General, and there are indications that he already perceived the nature of the storm brewing in France. Laclos, who wielded a very clever pen, sketched Talleyrand's character in his *Galerie des Etats-Généraux*, under the name of Amène. Said this sagacious and discriminating writer, 'Amène has charming manners, which embellish virtue. His first title to success is a sound understanding. Judging men with indulgence, events with calmness, he has in all things that moderation which is the characteristic of true philosophy. Amène has no idea of making a great reputation in a day; such reputations made too quickly soon begin to decline, and are followed by envy, disappointment, and sorrow. But Amène will arrive at everything, because he will always profit by those occasions which present themselves to such as do not attempt to ravish Fortune. Each step will be marked by the development of some talent, and thus he will at last acquire that general high opinion which summons a statesman to every great post that is vacant. Envy, which will always deny something to a person generally praised, will reply to what we have said that Amène has not that force and energy of character which is necessary to break through the obstacles that impede the course of a public man. It is true he will yield to circumstances and to rea-

son, and will deem that he can make sacrifices to peace without descending from principle; but firmness and constancy may exist without violent ardour or vapid enthusiasm. But what are we really to expect from Amène in the States-General? Nothing, if he is inspired with the spirit of class; much, if he acts after his own conceptions, and remembers that a national assembly only contains citizens.'

Mirabeau early descried the talent of this extraordinary man, who 'dressed like a coxcomb, thought like a deist, and preached like a saint.' Perceiving the wide range of his abilities, he distinguished him as one of the most powerful and versatile of the men of genius who then abounded in Europe. Through everything Talleyrand preserved a *sang-froid* which was inimitable. It was seen alike in small matters as in great. One day, as he was mounting the steps of his carriage, he spoke to an individual whom he had hitherto pretended not to recognise, but whom he knew very well. This person he had seen for days near his door. 'And who are you, my friend?' 'I am your coachmaker, my lord.' 'Ah, you are my coachmaker; and what do you want, my coachmaker?' 'I want to be paid, my lord.' 'Ah, you are my coachmaker, and you want to be paid; you shall be paid, my coachmaker.' 'And when, my lord?' 'You are very inquisitive,' said the Bishop, as he settled himself in the new carriage which he had not paid for.

The Bishop of Autun was very active in the States-General, and active in a manner which alarmed and disgusted the French clergy. He proposed several important measures, among others the suppression of tithes, and the appropriation of the property of the

clergy to the wants of the public treasury. Having decided in favour of ecclesiastical reforms, he decided that they should be thorough. It is, however, extremely probable also that he saw such measures as he determined to propose were imminent, and he therefore determined to take the credit of directing this popular movement against the clergy. In moving his sweeping propositions, Talleyrand said: 'I think that the nation in a period of general distress may appropriate the property of those religious establishments which it deems it necessary to suppress, by securing to their dependents their necessary subsistence; that it may also profit by all benefices to which no duties are attached, and assure to itself the reversion of all such benefices as may hereafter fall into that condition; and lastly, that it may reduce all extravagant salaries now enjoyed by the clergy, if it take to itself all the obligations—apart from the decent maintenance of the clergy—which originally attached to church property according to the founder's bequest. Such are the principles according to which the State may, in my opinion, legitimately appropriate the whole of the ecclesiastical property, on assuring to the clergy therefrom what would be sufficient for their decent support.' This ecclesiastical innovator of course paid the penalty of his daring. While the Faubourg St. Germain acknowledged him to be a statesman, it also owned that he was a rascal (*scélérat*). When he finally declared himself in favour of conferring upon a Jew the rights of a French citizen, he committed, in the eyes of many people, an unpardonable offence; and Lord Dalling and Bulwer says that in a well-known game, instead of the player saying, as he used to do,

that he made what was called 'la case du diable,' he would say, 'Je fais la case de l'évêque d'Autun.'

When Mirabeau died, scandalous reports were spread as to the cause of his death. Some roundly asserted that he had been poisoned, and that Talleyrand—in whose arms his friend Mirabeau expired—could reveal something upon this matter, if he chose. To show the nature of the infamous charges made against the Bishop of Autun, we quote the following passage from a foreign pamphlet, professedly describing the circumstances of Mirabeau's death: 'Mirabeau, Talleyrand, and four other profligate men supped, with as many women, at Robert's Restaurant, in the Palais Royal. In the midst of their gaiety, Madame de J——, a bookseller's wife of Paris, entered, and reproached Mirabeau with his infidelity in the most violent terms her jealousy could suggest, insisting that he should immediately leave his company and accompany her. After some recriminations, she at length appeared appeased, through the intercession of Talleyrand. She then placed herself at table, and the temporary *bonne amie* was dismissed. They then indulged in every kind of excess until four o'clock in the morning. To reanimate the drooping spirits, one of the party, Madame de J——, served coffee. Mirabeau had no sooner drunk his cup than he complained of violent spasms in his stomach. In the hope of alleviating his sufferings, he placed himself in a warm bath, and swallowed several cups of milk and cocoa. This beverage, which afforded a momentary relief, contributed to prolong his sufferings, as otherwise the poison he had taken in his coffee would have produced instant death. During his short

illness he refused to see Madame de J——, whom he accused of having hastened his death by the excess of her love. After his death, this woman lived for some time with Talleyrand, who transferred her to Pétion. This circumstance gave rise to the report spread at the time that Talleyrand had sold the secret of Mirabeau's change to the Republican faction. Madame de J—— was suspected of having, with the participation, and even at the instigation, of Talleyrand, been chosen by Pétion, Condorcet, Brissot, Cabanis, and others to destroy the most powerful barrier which had opposed, and could still oppose, a general revolution, and the foundation of a universal republic.' Such reports as this, though evidently utterly false and calumnious, serve to show, unfortunately, that Talleyrand's name was associated in the public mind with profligacy and debauchery.

In 1790 Talleyrand was named President of the States-General, and in the same year he officiated at the altar in the Champ de Mars on the day of the National Federation. He subsequently consecrated the first French bishops appointed under the new Constitution. This was a little too much for the Vatican, and he was excommunicated by Pope Pius VI. His resignation of the bishopric of Autun followed shortly after, and he was about the same time elected as a member of the Directory for the Department of Paris. In 1792 he was sent into England on a secret mission. The object of this mission was, according to an alleged statement by Talleyrand himself, to point out to England the advantages which might result to her from the Revolution, which had given France a constitutional king, and likewise to endeavour to strengthen

the ties which united the two courts. His reception by Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville was anything but encouraging: the latter described him as a profound and dangerous man. Nor did he meet with better recognition at Court. When he was presented to George III., his Majesty took scarcely any notice of him, and the Queen turned her back upon him with contempt. She justified this conduct on the score of the reputation for immorality which the Bishop of Autun had acquired. The consequence was that Talleyrand was excluded from the upper circles of society as a dangerous man and an agent of the unpopular Orleans faction.

He returned to Paris to find his friend M. de Narbonne out of office. The wily diplomatist, in accounting for the failure of his late mission, attributed it to the anomalous position he had occupied. This was soon rectified, and he was again sent to England, bearing this time a letter of recommendation from Louis XVI. to George III. He was accompanied by M. de Chauvelin as Minister Plenipotentiary. Talleyrand was for a second time unfortunate. The English Administration under Mr. Pitt, after favourably receiving the French envoys, subsequently ordered them to leave the country within twenty-four hours. Such virtually was the official intimation conveyed to them. The English Ministers could not reconcile the mission with the startling events which were taking place in France. The embassy was very unpopular in England, and M. Dumont described a scene at Ranelagh which well illustrated this. On his return to Paris, Talleyrand found himself by no means in an enviable position. The monarchy was just tottering to its fall, and

the various bodies of Republicans had coalesced for the purpose of rendering the victory of the people more complete. Talleyrand now became an object of suspicion on account of his birth, his prevocations, and the services which in turn he had rendered to almost every party. He was in a very critical situation; but fortunately he had a friend in Danton. From him he obtained a passport; and as Danton was a member of the Provisional Executive Council, this document saved him. He set out from France immediately, confirmed in his appointment to London by Danton. The French Republic was now proclaimed, and Paris was in a state of the most fervid enthusiasm.

At the time of Talleyrand's first mission to London, says a writer not too favourable to the diplomatist, he had 'adopted two distinct physiognomies, one of which he assumed in public and in matters of business, the other he wore when he mixed in the gaieties of the world and enjoyed the society of his intimate friends. He endeavoured to hide his ambition under an air of reserve, and adopted only the appearance of a profound thinker. He was at first extremely cold in his manner, as he has always been. He spoke little; he listened, or pretended to listen, with the greatest attention, as all men do who are more intent upon what they are going to answer than upon what is said to them. He kept himself aloof, and never committed himself. The English, who at that time had imbibed general prejudices against the character of the French, found in him neither the vivacity, the familiarity, nor the indiscretion and liveliness peculiar to that nation. A sententious manner, a frigid politeness, and an air of in-

vestigation, formed henceforward a kind of barrier with which he surrounded himself in the political part he was acting.'

But in his own intimate personal circle all this was reversed ; and numberless anecdotes are current respecting his lively conversation and his quickness at repartee. A few of these we may reproduce. A certain M. Rulhière having once said, 'I do not understand why I have the reputation of being wicked ; I never committed but one wicked action in the whole of my life,' the Bishop of Autun, who had hitherto remained silent, asked—with his sonorous voice and significant manner—'And when will it end ?' On another occasion, whilst playing at whist, the conversation turned upon a lady who, at the age of sixty, had married a kind of *valet-de-chambre*. Several persons expressed their astonishment at this singular match ; but the Bishop, who was counting his game, quietly remarked, 'At nine, honours go for nothing.' When his friend Narbonne, the Minister who had incurred the King's displeasure, was once walking arm-in-arm with him, and reciting some verses, Talleyrand, suddenly perceiving, at a short distance from them, a man who was yawning, interrupted his friend, saying, 'Narbonne, not so loud ;' and he pointed to the yawning man. Relating one day some infamous trait in the character of one of his colleagues, his hearers interrupted him, exclaiming, 'The man who could commit an act of that kind is capable of assassinating.' 'Assassinating ? no,' said Talleyrand calmly ; 'poisoning ? yes.' Being asked on a certain occasion to define his notion of an agreeable man, the Bishop of Autun replied, 'A man who agrees with me.' Lastly—for these stories

could be collected almost *ad infinitum*—when a troublesome acquaintance, who had continually pressed him for alms, thought he had clenched his case in one instance by remarking, 'I must live, you know,' Talleyrand complacently replied, 'I do not see the necessity.'

Talleyrand was impeached by the French Convention after his departure from Paris. Among the documents found in the King's iron closet was a letter from Laporte, intendant of the King's household, addressed to his Majesty, and stating that the Bishop of Autun was desirous of serving his sovereign, and begging to know how the King could put his zeal and influence to the test. Talleyrand afterwards denied the statements in Laporte's letter. But this was not all. A deserter named Achille Viard declared at the National Assembly that, during one of his journeys to London, he knew M. de Talleyrand to be connected with several proscribed emigrants, especially Narbonne, the Duc d'Aiguillon, and Madame du Barry. He was certain that a plot was forming against France, and that Talleyrand was one of its abettors. Viard was a man of no character ; but in consequence of his statements the impeachment of Talleyrand was immediately agreed to. An able if specious letter appeared in the *Moniteur* in favour of the accused ; but the Convention insisted upon its decree of impeachment being carried out in full force. Accordingly, on the 8th of April 1793, Talleyrand was officially included in the list of emigrants. He now returned to England, where he remained until the passing of the Alien Act. Under the conditions of this Act he was driven from the country ; and having thus no refuge left him in Europe, he sought one in the United States.

On the whole, he appears to have been well received in America; for we find Washington writing as follows to the Marquis of Lansdowne, from whom Talleyrand had borne a letter of introduction: 'I hear that the general reception he has met with is such as to console him, as far as the state of our society will permit, for what he abandoned on quitting Europe. Time will naturally be favourable to him wherever he may be; and one must believe that it will elevate a man of his talents and merit above the transitory disadvantages which result from differences as to politics in revolutionary times.' While in the United States, Talleyrand was engaged in commercial transactions; but it was not long before a successful effort was made in the Convention to recall him to France. On the 18th of Fructidor, just after the return of M. de Montesquieu had been allowed, Joseph Marie Chénier thus addressed the Convention on behalf of Talleyrand: 'I have a similar permission to demand for one of the most distinguished members of the Constituent Assembly, M. de Talleyrand-Périgord, the famous Bishop of Autun. Our different Ministers of Paris bear witness to his services. I have in my hands a memoir, of which the duplicate exists in the papers of Danton; the date of this memoir is 23d of November 1792, and it proves that M. de Talleyrand was actually occupied in the affairs of the Republic when he was proscribed by it. Thus, persecuted by Marat and Robespierre, he was also banished by Pitt from England; but the place of exile that he chose was the country of Franklin, where, in contemplating the imposing spectacle of a free people, he might await the time when France should have judges and

not murderers; a Republic, and not anarchy called laws!' Lord Dalling and Bulwer asks: 'How are we to reconcile this declaration with M. de Talleyrand's solemn protestations to Lord Grenville? How could M. de Talleyrand have been writing memoirs to Danton, and yet have come over to England solely for the purpose of seeking repose?' The safest way is not to attempt to reconcile these things; for if a man were to address himself to the task of explaining everything that is contradictory in Talleyrand's career, it would be adding a new task to the labours of Hercules.

The matter of chief moment now to record is that the Convention granted permission to Talleyrand to return. In July 1795, accordingly, he arrived at Hamburg, the place of refuge for almost all *émigrés*, but especially Orleanists. From there he went to Paris, and in a short time he accepted the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs. But he was speedily attacked as a noble and an *émigré*, upon which he resigned his department, and published a defence of his conduct. This was spirited and plausible; and his counter-attacks upon his enemies were very effective. There were already beginning to appear signs of the falling power of the Directory.

The 18th of Brumaire arrived, upon which a revolution had been decided on. 'It was to be brought about by the Ancients, of whom Sieyès was sure, and who were to declare that the Chambers were in danger at Paris, and should be assembled at St. Cloud. The safety of these assemblies was then to be confided to the guardianship of Bonaparte; and the dissolution of the Directory, by the resignation of a majority of its members, was to follow. After

this, it was supposed that the majority of the Five Hundred, overawed by a large military force, opposed by the other branch of the Legislature, and having no Government to support it, would, in some way or other, be overcome. The first two measures accordingly were taken on the 18th of Brumaire, but the third remained. Sieyès and Ducos, who acted together, and who resigned, were balanced by Gohier and Moulins, who would not give in their resignation; while Barras had the casting vote. And it was M. de Talleyrand, again, who, in conjunction with Admiral Bruix, was charged with the task of coaxing this once important man into accepting insignificance and retreat. In this task he succeeded; and the vanquished Director, conquered as much, perhaps, by his own indolence as by his politic friend's arguments, stepped out of the bath, reposing in which his two visitors had found him, into the carriage which bore him from the Luxembourg. And thus the Directory being no longer in existence, a charge of grenadiers in the orangery of St. Cloud settled the affair on the day following.' Napoleon became First Consul, and as Talleyrand had had much to do in effecting these changes, he was confirmed in his previous post of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Talleyrand had early perceived the great genius of Napoleon, and formed the conviction that he was the coming man—the man of power. It was he who projected the marriage between Madame de Beauharnais and General Bonaparte. Napoleon was deeply enamoured of the lady; but her thoughtlessness and light conduct alarmed him, and sometimes this appeared an insuperable barrier to their union. But Talleyrand

was born to grapple with difficulties; and one day he thus addressed Bonaparte: 'Citizen, you have furnished proofs of ardent patriotism; you are reproached with being perhaps a little too exaggerated in your opinions, for we have now become more moderate. Your services on the 13th of Vendémiaire do not suit everybody; they have an appearance of Jacobinism, from which it will be proper for you to purify yourself. You can effect this by victories; they are the only means now acknowledged in France of reinstating a man in public opinion,—you can only be received when crowned with laurels. Believe me, marry a woman who will bring you as her dowry these brilliant hopes, which it will depend upon yourself to realise.' Talleyrand intended to convey by this speech that if Napoleon did not marry Madame de Beauharnais he would not obtain the supreme command of the army in Italy; and his words had the desired effect. The diplomatist brought round the Directory to his views. Bonaparte obtained the command of the army of Italy; his marriage took place; and after its celebration he began that brilliant career which was soon to astonish Europe and the world.

In the year 1802, a brief from Pius VII. released the ex-Bishop of Autun from ecclesiastical ties, and he shortly afterwards married Madame Grandt of Hamburg. This lady, who was born in the East Indies, had been divorced from her previous husband. She was as remarkable for her beauty as she was for her lack of wit; and it was she who asked Sir George Robinson after his 'Man Friday.' Talleyrand vindicated his choice of her by saying, 'A clever wife often compromises her husband;

a stupid one only compromises herself.'

When Napoleon became the head of the State there were only two men—Talleyrand and Fouché—unconnected with the army who could boast of having contributed to the First Consul's fortunes. Fouché brought back to him all those who were intriguing or ambitious among the Jacobins, enticing them by his own example, and dazzling their eyes with the bait of places and money. Talleyrand served his new master assiduously and confidentially. A council was held on the 10th of March 1804, at which were present the three consuls, Bonaparte, Cambacérès, and Lebrun; Regnier, Minister of Justice and Police; and Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was discussed whether it would not be advisable to seize the Duc d'Enghien, though out of France, and bring him to Paris. The result was the despatch of an expedition, which seized the Prince. Having been confined two days at Strasburg, he was brought to Paris, and on the 21st was shot at Vincennes, after being condemned by a military commission on the charge of having borne arms against the Republic, of being in the pay of England, and of having been engaged in plots against the French Government. 'The whole of this proceeding is atrocious,' justly says one writer. 'A prince of the dethroned family is arrested in a neutral State, without a shadow of legality; he is brought to Paris and tried for his life on accusations which, considering his birth and position, no generous enemy could have considered crimes; he is found guilty without a witness being called, without a proof of the charges brought against him being adduced, and without a person to defend him being al-

lowed. This trial takes place at midnight in a dungeon; and the prisoner is shot before the break of day in a ditch!'

This is one of the blackest stains upon Napoleon's character, and he has enough of them to support, in all conscience. It is said that Talleyrand, so far from favouring the murder, warned the Duc d'Enghien, through the Princesse de Rohan, of the danger in which he stood. So far so good; but on the other hand, we must agree with the remark that to have lent himself, even in appearance, to so dark a deed, and to have remained an instrument in Napoleon's hands after its committal, evinces a far stronger sense of the benefits attaching to office than of the obloquy attaching to injustice. Talleyrand felt this himself; and on being remonstrated with upon one occasion, and pressed to resign his office, he replied, 'If Bonaparte has been guilty, as you say, of a crime, that is no reason why I should be guilty of a folly.' It would have been extremely difficult to place Talleyrand in a position where he would have been unable to press casuistry into his service in favour of his interests.

Although Talleyrand was the right hand of Napoleon in regard to most questions, there was one subject on which he was strongly opposed to him. This was in relation to the affairs of the Peninsula. When the French armies took possession of Burgos and Barcelona without notice; when an insurrection deposed Charles IV., and the Emperor Napoleon was about to adopt the policy, not of peaceably aggrandising France and strengthening Spain against Great Britain, but of kidnapping the Spanish princes, and obtaining by fraud the Spanish crown, Talleyrand

exclaimed, 'On s'empare des couronnes, mais on ne les escamote pas'—'One may take a crown from a sovereign's head, but one does not pick his pocket of it.' Again: 'Victories,' he said, 'do not suffice to efface such things as these, because there is something in them which it is impossible to describe, that is vile, deceitful, cheating. I cannot tell what will happen, but you will see that no one will pardon him (the Emperor) for this.' The attitude assumed by Talleyrand on the Spanish question is certainly remarkable when we remember his views of diplomacy; and here again he has been charged with double conduct. The Comte de Beugnot states in his memoirs that Napoleon in his presence had more than once reproached Talleyrand for having counselled what took place at Bayonne, without Talleyrand seeking to excuse himself. However, as Lord Dalling and Bulwer says, there can be no doubt that what took place as to Spain was a subject of great difference between Talleyrand and Napoleon. 'M. de Talleyrand would never afterwards, during the reign of Louis XVIII., have publicly affirmed this, surrounded as he was by contemporaries and enemies, if it had not been true. Moreover, the general voice of the time, which is more in such cases to be trusted than any individual testimony, loudly proclaimed it; and as to not answering Napoleon when he was pouring forth in violent and insulting language the accusations which he sometimes levelled at those who displeased him, it is well known that M. de Talleyrand never replied to such attacks but by an impassible face and a dignified silence.' Talleyrand also strongly disapproved of Bonaparte's hostile policy against the Pope.

In the rivalry which long subsisted between Fouché and Talleyrand, the latter was ultimately victorious; and we ought to have stated that in 1806, when Napoleon became Emperor, Talleyrand was elevated to the rank of Prince of Benevento, and appointed Grand Chamberlain of the Empire. In the following year he was succeeded as Minister of Foreign Affairs by M. de Champagny, Duc de Cadore, and was named Vice-Grand Elector.

In 1813, Napoleon again offered the portfolio of foreign affairs to Talleyrand, on condition that he should lay down the rank and emoluments of Vice-Grand Elector. It was the Emperor's object to make his Minister dependent entirely upon his place. Talleyrand was not averse from accepting the office, but he declined the condition sought to be imposed. 'If the Emperor trusts me,' he said, 'he should not degrade me; and if he does not trust me he should not employ me: the times are too difficult for half-measures.' At this period the fortunes of Napoleon began to assume a critical aspect. Besides having suffered the terrible disaster at Moscow, he could not regard the condition of things in Spain except with feelings of bitter disappointment. In Germany also, and Italy, Holland, and Denmark, there were evidences of a great revulsion of feeling. Talleyrand, no doubt, took into account all this when he declined to accept office. The Emperor was much chagrined at his refusal, and some of his counsellors advised him to arrest Talleyrand on a charge of treason. There was no proof of this, however, and even the Emperor dreaded too much the consequences of the step of arresting a man like Talleyrand.

But although Napoleon forbore

from going to this length, he could still annoy Talleyrand by his tongue. Many were the scenes which took place between the two. On one occasion, Napoleon having said that if he thought his own death likely he would take care that the Vice-Grand Elector should not survive him, Talleyrand quietly replied that he did not desire that reason for hoping that his Majesty's life might be long preserved. Another scene has been thus described by M. Molé : 'At the end of the Council of State, which took place just before the Emperor started for the campaign of 1814, he burst out into some violent exclamations of his being surrounded by treachery and traitors ; and then turning to M. de Talleyrand, he abused him for ten minutes in the most violent and outrageous manner. Talleyrand was standing by the fire all this time, guarding himself from the heat of the flame with his hat ; he never moved a limb or a feature ; any one who had seen him would have thought he was the last man in the room to whom the Emperor could be speaking ; and finally, when Napoleon, slamming the door violently, departed, Talleyrand quietly took the arm of M. Molliou, and limped with apparent unconsciousness down-stairs. But on getting home he wrote a dignified letter to the Emperor, saying, that if he retained his present dignity, he should be by right one of the regency ; and that as he could not think of holding such a charge after the opinion his Majesty had expressed of him, he begged to resign his post, and to be allowed to retire into the country. He was informed, however, that his resignation would not be accepted, and that he might stay where he was.' It is reported that Fouché and Talleyrand once actually came to blows in the very

closet of the Emperor upon the subject of the misapplication of the secret funds, of which they mutually accused each other. After listening to their accusations and justifications on both sides, Napoleon turned them out of the room, saying, 'Go along ; you are both of you rogues.'

For many reasons Talleyrand had now become alienated from Napoleon. He saw, in 1814, that the Empire stood upon a very insecure foundation, and he began to pave the way for his own reconciliation with the Bourbons. He did not actually desert the Bonaparte dynasty ; but when a man of his deep penetration and discernment began to say civil things of the members of the dethroned house, this was a very considerable straw to show which way the wind was blowing. When the advice, which he strongly urged at the council, to the effect that the Empress should remain in Paris while the allies were approaching the capital, was rejected, he said to Savary, 'Here, then, is the end of all this. Is not that also your opinion ? We lose the rubber with a fair game. Just see where the stupidity of a few ignorant men, who perseveringly work on the influence acquired by daily intercourse, ends by carrying one. In truth, the Emperor is much to be pitied ; and yet nobody pities him ; for his obstinacy in holding to those who surround him has no reasonable motive ; it is only a weakness which cannot be conceived in such a man. What a fall in history, to give his name to adventures instead of giving it to his age ! When I think of this I cannot help being grieved. And now what is to be done ? It does not suit every one to be crushed under the ruins of the edifice that is to be overthrown.' The last sentence proves that the speaker was

already meditating his escape from the impending catastrophe.

Shortly after this, Talleyrand received at his house, in the Rue St. Florentin, the Emperor of Russia. A council was held, at which the affairs of France were discussed. The Emperor having made certain suggestions with regard to the French crown, Talleyrand said, 'Sire, you may depend upon it there are but two things possible—Bonaparte or Louis XVIII. I say Bonaparte; but here the choice will not depend wholly on your Majesty, for you are not alone. If we are to have a soldier, however, let it be Napoleon; he is the first in the world. I repeat it, sire, Bonaparte or Louis XVIII.: each represents a party, any other merely an intrigue.' This decided the Emperor, and he said afterwards, 'When I arrived at Paris I had no plan. I referred everything to Talleyrand; he had the family of Napoleon in one hand, and that of the Bourbons in the other; I took what he gave me.' A proclamation was issued to the effect that the allies would not treat either with Napoleon or any member of his family. Bonaparte endeavoured to treat with the sovereigns; but on the 1st of April the French Senate assembled, and a provisional government was formed, consisting of five members, with Talleyrand at its head. Napoleon sent some of his marshals to the Czar; but Talleyrand, who maintained his influence over the Emperor, remarked, 'Pardon my observations, sire: others are uneasy, but I am not; for I know full well that a sovereign at the head of a valorous army is not likely to admit the dictation of a few officers of a hostile force, more particularly when they represent the very principle of constant war, which the French nation repu-

diates, and which has armed the allies.' In the end the Senate framed a constitution, which was published on the 8th of April, creating a constitutional monarchy with two chambers, and conferring the throne of France on Louis XVIII., if he accepted that constitution. A treaty was also signed by which Marie Louise and her son received the principality of Parma, and Napoleon was awarded the sovereignty of Elba, a little island on the coast of Italy. Remembering the way in which the great conqueror had played with kingdoms and empires, this was something like offering him a sugar-stick.

Some little trouble was caused by Louis XVIII.; but he finally accepted the crown as a right, and granted the constitution which had been drawn up. Talleyrand became his Minister of Foreign Affairs; but just as the Government was being established upon what seemed likely to be a durable basis, the news reached Paris that Napoleon had escaped from Elba. A new treaty was made against him; but he marched on Paris, and was installed at the Tuileries. The allies again took up the cause of Louis XVIII., and Talleyrand went to Ghent to consult with the Bourbons. He was again made Minister, but found himself opposed by the Royalist party and by the Emperor of Russia. He soon resigned office in consequence, and was awarded by the King a pension of one hundred thousand francs, being also appointed Great Chamberlain.

In a document written in defence of Talleyrand we find the following passage explaining his conduct at this juncture: 'He repels the reproach of having betrayed Napoleon; if he abandoned him, it was when he discovered

that he could no longer blend, as he had up to that time done, France and the Emperor in the same affection. This was not without a lively feeling of sorrow, for he owed to Napoleon nearly all his fortune. He enjoins his heirs never to forget these obligations, to tell them to their children, and to instruct these again to tell them to their offspring; so that if some day a man of the name of Bonaparte should be found in want of assistance, he should always find it in the family of Talleyrand.'

Talleyrand appeared little in public during the period of his retirement, which closed with the dethronement of Charles X. But he spoke twice in the House of Peers, once protesting against

the Spanish War, and, in the second case, in defence of the liberty of the press. His sentiments on the latter question did him honour. 'When the press is free,' he said, 'when each one knows that his interests are or will be defended, all wait with patience a justice more or less tardy. Hope supports, and with reason, for this hope cannot be deceived for long; but when the press is enslaved, when no voice can be raised, discontent will soon exact, on the part of the Government, either too much concession or too much repression.'

We reserve for another article our account of Talleyrand at the English Court, and of the closing years of his life.

A FABLE FROM THE SOUDAN.

PROBABLY there is no form of literature that so much makes mankind feel that they are all members of one large family as folk-tales. The science of comparative mythology has greatly helped forward the feeling of universal brotherhood. When we come in contact with primitive modes of thought and feeling we invariably encounter that one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. Folk-tales give us the true tone of man in his childhood, when as yet, as Carlyle aptly says, 'the universe within was divided by no wall of adamant from the universe without.' An extended knowledge of this primitive literature is consequently of more value than would at first appear, and every such accession to our information should be eagerly welcomed. As yet Africa—that great Sphinx-land—has been most resolutely closed to us in this respect. We know little of the mental life of her races, especially those that people the interior. Anything is therefore doubly welcome which helps us to see if we can discover in the legendary lore of the Africans the same wondrous touch of unity that breathes through that of other continents, even though, as is sometimes the case, it is disguised in unfamiliar shapes. To the industry and research of an Austrian scholar we owe the first contribution towards the folk-lore of equatorial Africa. Herr Ernst Marno accompanied Colonel Gordon in his expedition (undertaken in 1874-76) into the interior of

the Khedive's dominions, far into the Soudan. Of this journey, with the help of the Austrian Imperial Academy of Sciences, he published a detailed account. One chapter relates some of the tales that are disseminated over the whole of equatorial Africa. They are narrated by wandering storytellers, and are listened to with the same breathless interest that distinguishes Arab and other non-literary audiences. These tales treat chiefly of animals, and more especially of the slyness and craft of the jackal, a near relative to our fox, who is always spoken of under the name of Abu'l Hossein, much as the fox is known in literature as Master Reynard. This peculiarity, as well as many others developed in these stories, would seem to point to a common Indo-Germanic origin. Here is a translation of one of these fables, known as 'Abu'l Hossein and the Crocodile.'

'A large crocodile carefully selected as its lair that spot in the river where he knew men and beasts must come down to drink, and then patiently awaited his prey. When the beasts became aware of this they abandoned the spot, and turned to a more remote watering-place. But Abu'l Hossein did not wish to give himself this trouble. He drew a long reed from out the thicket bordering the river, seated himself on a tree overhanging the water, and drank comfortably and safely out of this tube whenever he was thirsty. The crocodile, who noticed this, was much annoyed at

his proceeding, and begged the ant to oblige him by biting Abu'l Hossein from behind when next he came to drink. So when Abu'l Hossein next sat upon his tree and drank out of his reed, the ant bit him hard. This startled Abu'l Hossein; he let the reed fall to scratch himself, and in so doing he overbalanced and fell into the water, where he was seized by the crocodile, who was lying in wait.

"Now I have got you," said the crocodile; "and to-day all is over with you."

"What will you do with me?" asked Abu'l Hossein; "my flesh is so hard and tough that you cannot enjoy it undressed."

"Very well," said the crocodile; "then I will roast you."

'So speaking, he seized Abu'l Hossein and gave him to his old blind grandmother. She was to roast Abu'l Hossein, and in return to receive the paw by which she held him; the rest was to fall to the share of the crocodile, who at once went off to seek for firing.

'Abu'l Hossein in this his sore extremity perceived a piece of wood floating down the stream. He grasped it with the paw that was free, and holding it out to the old blind crocodile grandmother, he said,

"Take hold of me here by the head, else I shall escape you."

'The grandmother seized the piece of wood extended to her, and thus let go of Abu'l Hossein, who ran off as fast as his legs could carry him.

"Why do you hold that piece of wood in your hand, and what have you done with Abu'l Hossein?" said the crocodile, when he returned with the sticks for firing.

'For a long while the grandmother would not believe that she grasped a piece of wood with her hand, and thought the crocodile only spoke thus that she might

not have her promised share of the booty. She upbraided the crocodile, he scolded back in return; and so both jangled on till each was deeply angered with the other. At last the crocodile set out across the land to pursue Abu'l Hossein. Fury had made him careless; he wandered too far away from the river, and by and by the unwonted exercise across the arid ground, the heat, thirst, and hunger made him sink down on the steppe quite exhausted. Here he lay a long while, and it seemed as though he must perish miserably.

'Then a man came riding past upon a camel. He saw the half-dead crocodile, and was not a little astonished when he thus spoke to him with feeble voice:

"I pray you be so good as to convey me back to the river, and I will swear to you never again to harm a being of Adam's race."

'The man took pity upon the crocodile, bound him, and loaded him upon his camel. Thus he brought him to the river's bank.

"Shall I release you here?" asked the man.

"Take me where the water is deep," replied the crocodile; and the man brought him to deep water, unbound him, and let him free. But the crocodile now seized the man, and said, "So, now I retain you, or else you must give me your camel."

"But you promised never again to hurt a human being," said the man.

"Yes," said the crocodile; "but to-day I am hungry. It can't be helped. Either you or your camel."

'At this moment the hyena passed by, and was appealed to by both to decide their dispute. Now the hyena did not wish to fall out with either the man or the crocodile; but in order to

compass the escape of the man, he said to the crocodile :

"When you have caught a human being, do not eat him in the water, but bring him out on dry land, or he will disagree with you."

"It so happened that at this moment Abu'l Hossein came by. The hyena told him the story, and asked him what could be done ; while both the man and the crocodile begged Abu'l Hossein to be umpire in this matter. Abu'l Hossein called out to them :

"I am rather hard of hearing. Both of you come out on to the shore, that I may cross-examine you and understand the case."

"The man and the crocodile did as he desired ; and Abu'l Hossein asked the man how all this had come about, and was told the story.

"Probably you bound the crocodile too tight, and so hurt him and made him angry," said Abu'l Hossein, when he had heard all.

"Yes, yes," said the crocodile. "He bound me so tight that I could not breathe ; and all the ribs of my body still ache as though they were broken."

"I cannot decide this matter without judging with my own eyes," said Abu'l Hossein. "Let the man bind you once more as before."

"Good," said the crocodile ; "I will consent to be bound, and then you shall decide."

"The man bound the crocodile as before.

"Did the man bind you thus ?" asked Abu'l Hossein.

"No ; much tighter," replied the crocodile.

"Very well," said Abu'l Hossein to the man, "tie him tighter."

"And the man bound him so tight, that the crocodile screamed,

"Enough, enough ! this was how he bound me !"

"Then Abu'l Hossein said to the man,

"You must have been mad to tie the poor crocodile thus. Allah gave into your hands a mass of meat, and you did not kill this son of a dog !"

"The crocodile, when he heard this, saw what Abu'l Hossein was aiming at, and begged for mercy. But the man killed the crocodile, and carried home the flesh."

Might not this fable have emanated from Kriloff, or even from Æsop ?

In recent literature readers will be struck by the resemblance of the foregoing fable to the doings of 'Brere Rabbit,' 'Brere Fox,' and 'Brere Tarrypin,' as narrated with quaint humour in the plantation stories of *Uncle Remus*.*

* London : David Bogue.



WANTED,
A
FAIRY
GODMOTHER.

A Valentine.

— If I chanced by luck on a
darling duck
Of a fairy kind and fond,
To-morrow I'd change to a
song-bird, struck
By her wonder-working
wand—
A robin, mayhap, a tight
little chap,
With a nice little voice
and ear;
And I'd wing my way in
the morning gray
To your chamber-window,
dear.

I'd flutter my wing, and I'd chirp and sing,
Till you came to list my lay;
And 'dear little thing! you sweet little thing!
Come, perch on my hand,' you'd say.
Then, presto! strange, to myself I'd change,
And I'd kiss your lips and cheek;
And I'd hold you fast, till you vowed at last
To marry me that day week!

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.

THE SENIOR PARTNER.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL, AUTHOR OF 'GEORGE GEITH,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVII

MR. MOSTIN'S NEWS.

THOUGH things were not so bad as had been represented in the Robert McCullagh household, they were, after his departure, bad enough. It is not just at the first poverty seems so intolerable a burden. People scarcely understand, and certainly do not fully believe in, it.

During the earlier days, a reserve of strength, spirit, and resource remains; but as the weeks and the months go by, strength, spirit, and resource become exhausted.

Like the clothing bought in more prosperous days, these good things eventually wear threadbare; and it is at that precise stage, reverse of fortune is regarded as unendurable: people have lost the independence of wealth without gaining the independence of poverty; the habits, ideas, restrictions of a different class press them to the ground. The uses of adversity seem to them all bitter. They have been forced to move in a hurry from one state of life to another, and the excitement being over, the discomfort begins. They cannot find a thing they have been accustomed to regard as necessary. For the time being, life seems a hopeless tangle, and the attempt to make both ends meet an absurd impossibility.

Nevertheless, the struggle having to be made, Janey set about it with such courage as she could command; and she was in the middle of a not totally unsucces-

ful effort to contrive that her outgoings should not exceed her incomings, when Mrs. Lilands became suddenly worse, and then in a moment all her daughter's plans and good intentions were scattered to the wind. Whatever the doctor ordered was got; and Janey found herself sinking into a sea of debt she feared must overwhelm her completely.

But this fresh illness did not last long; and without knowing what it was to lack one single material comfort her child's unselfish love was able to procure, Mrs. Lilands passed quietly away.

It was then Janey found what Alfred Mostin's intervention had done for her. She was still to receive the same amount of money. She and her children were not left destitute. There were the debts, but she could manage them; by dint of the closest economy she felt sure they might live, and yet pay every one.

This was, then, the task that, in the poor lodging near the Lower-road, she set herself to finish; and it seemed to her, as it has seemed since to many a woman similarly situated, very hard she should be compelled to commence her course of severe retrenchment by putting herself and her four children into mourning.

Nevertheless, she did it; and with no visitors save Alfred Mostin and the doctor's sister from Old Ford, set herself patiently to do the best she could in the way of paying off debts and living on what remained, till such time as her husband should be able to

write for her and the children to join him.

If she sometimes found economy work hard against the collar, Robert ere long discovered that trying to make his fortune in America was a task utterly beyond such powers as he possessed.

The very qualities which at Pousnetts' had served him to good purpose now proved impediments in his way; and surely though slowly he arrived at the conviction the senior partner had not been mistaken when he implied he lacked cleverness.

'And my father always thought so too,' considered Robert bitterly, 'and I believe they were both right.'

There is no harder reflection can occur to a man than that others are possessed of a larger share of brains than himself; but in Robert's case the knowledge, late though it came, produced one good result. He did not strive after impossibilities; he tried to think he was contented in a very poor situation. By dint of industry and plodding he had risen before, and he hoped by the same means he might rise again. But the conditions of society are not the same, even in the same countries, at different periods of life, and Robert was forced to confess in his letters home that the prospect did not seem encouraging. He was able to live, and that appeared about all he could do at the present; after a time perhaps things might mend. .

It could not be considered very satisfactory, yet still Janey did not despond. She taught her children; she took them out to walk; she visited her stanch friend at Old Ford; she delighted to hear Alfred Mostin ask her for a cup of tea, the most extravagant hospitality she was able to offer. Life did not seem to be sad be-

cause she chanced to be poor: it was only the separation from her husband that troubled her; only the uncertainty of a future which, though she had money enough to keep them from actual want, he seemed afraid to ask her to share.

Like Robert, however, she thought that perhaps after a time things might mend; and meantime the work allotted her appeared to be to make the best of matters as they were.

In the rush and hurry of London life, and in view of the thousand events which had taken place since Pousnett and Co. (Limited) came down with a run, that once notorious failure had grown to be regarded as quite an old story. People remembered, of course, such a smash once took place, but it had long ceased to be a nine days' wonder. Worse things had happened since then; more iniquitous swindles exposed; a greater number of innocent shareholders 'let in;' and cleverer men even than Pousnett found to be perfectly safe, so far as their own incomes were concerned.

In a word, the enormous capabilities of limited liability were being discovered, and while one section of society was blessing the Act, another was anathematising the day they trusted their good money to its tender mercies.

But then of course what benefits Thomas, proves an evil to John! Limited liability is only a practical illustration of the truth of the old proverb which declares 'one man's meat to be another man's poison.'

Anyhow, Pousnetts' was an almost forgotten episode in the City of London. At the West-end he who had been the senior partner moved in better society than ever. If people living beyond Charing Cross once began to inquire too curiously as to

how some of their charming friends made their money due east they would have enough to do, and as the result could not fail to be other than disagreeable, it is as well that a hard and fast rule seems to have been laid down as to the undesirability of too much research of this nature. Stories that had floated round and about Capel-court and the Exchange never reached those charmed circles where the Pousnetts were considered 'delightful.' His daughter held rank as a most amiable and fascinating woman, whose devotion to a husband older than herself was beyond all praise. There was a talk of Pousnett himself standing as member for a borough where Lord Cresham's interest was as paramount as the interest of a lord can be anywhere nowadays in England. Mr. Pousnett's receptions were always mentioned in the *Morning Post*. Miss Vanderton's husband had scaled successfully many of the heights of clerical promotion. Stanley Pousnett, the only one of the family who proved quite unequal to the dignity of the name he bore, had hidden his diminished head in a remote district of Wales, where Mrs. Stanley owned a small estate. Another company had taken up the Norman's Bay speculation, and property there was now more valuable than ever.

Mr. Pousnett had done very well for himself and family, and if other persons had failed to do likewise, the fault was theirs, not his. He could not be held answerable for the non-success of incompetent nincompoops. Every one connected with Pousnetts', except the shareholders, might have acquired a fair income; if any one failed to do so, it was a mere folly to blame the man who had put such a chance in the way

of those persons unable to take advantage of it. That was all which could be said about the matter. Meanwhile, the shareholders had lost every penny they invested. Robert McCullagh was in America, and Janey in narrow lodgings, turning her own dresses and mending her children's clothes.

One evening Alfred Mostin entered those lodgings, and, while divesting himself of coat and hat, asked,

'Have you heard anything lately about Mr. McCullagh, Janey?'

She looked up a little surprised. It was late; the children were in bed at that hour; she had not expected a visitor, and the tone of his question told he had some special reason for putting it.

'What is the matter?' she therefore inquired, after the manner of a person who had grown accustomed to bad news.

'He is not expected to live.'

'O, I am grieved!'

'I don't see why you should be. What good was his life to anybody?'

This was one of the points on which she and Mr. Mostin had never agreed, but she did not feel disposed to enter upon a controversy concerning Mr. McCullagh's merits or demerits then.

'Has he been ill long?' she asked.

'No, not very; it's fever. He either caught a chill at the Docks, or—and this the doctor thinks more probable—caught the infection from some one down there. He came back, complained that he thought he had taken a cold, went to bed, next morning was delirious, and now is given over; and the whole family is wondering whether he has made a will, and if so, how he has disposed of the "gear."'

'They are all with him, I sup-

pose? said Janey, who, though disappointed and hurt by the tenor of Mr. Mostin's utterances, still did not care to take up arms upon the old vexed subject.

'With him!' repeated Alfred scornfully; 'what should they be with him for, when, whether the man has made a will or not, the thing is past changing now? The doctors have given him over; it's as much as a fellow's life is worth to go into the sick-room, for it is some uncommon and awful sort of fever. So plain auld Rab, spite of all his money, is left to die just as any pauper might; and serve him right too!' added Mr. Mostin under his breath.

But Janey heard what he said.

'Don't, Alfred! don't, don't, don't!' she cried; 'you cannot think how you hurt me. O, what a dreadful thing for the poor old man!'

'Why was he so hard with others, then?' persisted Mr. Mostin doggedly. 'Why did he set up money as a god and worship it? why was he so unjust to Bob, and cruel to you? why did he grudge every other man the chance of getting a living? why did he deny himself and everybody about him almost the common necessities of life? It was all done that he might add pound to pound and hundred to hundred. He will never be sensible enough again to know precisely what his much prized gold did for him, and that is all I feel sorry about. Such men ought to realise that if in their worst extremity they call from morning until noon upon Mammon, as the priests did at Carmel to Baal, they will receive no answer.'

'Do you really mean to say,' began Janey, ignoring the last expression of opinion, which, indeed, by long experience she

knew too well it was vain to combat, 'that Mr. McCullagh has none of his sons with him?'

'That is precisely what I do mean to say. He has none of his sons or his sons' wives, or Mrs. Nicol, or one of the lot. An old servant stuck to him, I suppose because she had no choice, and Mrs. Roy, it seems, went in to help; but she has had to give up the attempt, and there is now only that hired woman waiting to see him die.'

'It is too shocking,' murmured Janey.

'To do old Roy justice, he did seem sorry,' went on Alfred Mostin; 'but I suppose he will lose his berth, so that even he was not quite disinterested. He is just another of the same kidney. But look here, Janey, don't you cry; don't, dear. Why in the world should you be troubled, no matter what happens to him?'

She did not answer; she only covered her face and sobbed grievously. She had the strongest feeling that, no matter what a father was, his children should cling to and honour him; and deep down in her heart there lay a conviction that, but for adverse circumstances, Mr. McCullagh would have turned out a far different man. She had always been sorry for him, always known that even in the full sunshine of his prosperity he was a lonely man; and now to hear of him ill, dying, attended only by hirelings, his sons merely anxious to hear how he had left his money, without a loving hand to smooth his pillow and moisten his lips and soothe his death agony, seemed to her so horrible an end of an honest and laborious and unsatisfactory life, she could only tell with her tears how deep was her sympathy.

'I think Bob will be cut up,' said Mr. Mostin, when Janey, hav-

ing dried her eyes, was trying to regain her composure. 'Though he and his father never did stable their horses together, he was the only dutiful member of the family, and I always believed the old man felt proud of him. If he had not been so like his mother, they might have hit it off better; but, as I have told you, she never missed a chance of rubbing her husband the wrong way. She was a fool, and she got a bad set round her. Her father used to say if she had chosen to take the right way with him, she might have led her husband with a silken thread. There I do believe he had good in him, if she had brought it out; and if it vexes you, I will never say another word against old Scrooge.'

'Ah, Alfred!' she softly expostulated; and then added, 'It does vex me, more than words can express.'

All that livelong night Janey tossed restlessly. She could not get any settled sleep. She had felt very tired when Alfred Mostin came in; but yet after she lay down, the moment her eyes closed they opened again, and she found herself wide awake, thinking of what was going on in the old house just off Basinghall-street.

Mr. McCullagh's face haunted her, his fate pursued her into the dim slumber-land when she touched its confines for a moment. She thought of Robert far away; of her mother dead; of all the changes which had come and gone since her marriage; of how earnestly she once hoped to reconcile father and son. And now it was all over—the end had come. Already those terrible footsteps, the sound of which those who have once heard their stealthy tread can never forget, seemed at the door; and of poor Mr. McCullagh and his imperfect and unenjoyed

life there would remain but the money he could not carry away with him, and his name carved on senseless stone.

She rose early the next morning, dressed her children, gave them their breakfast, tried to swallow some herself, and then, asking the landlady to see to her little ones till her return, hurried away Cityward. It was not much after nine when she reached Finsbury, but the streets were full of merchants hurrying to their offices, of clerks bustling along. The morning had broken dull and misty, and gave no promise of brightening up. Janey's spirits were in unison with the weather; everything seemed to her gloomy in the extreme.

'Where are ye off to at this hour?' asked some one behind her, as she crossed over London Wall; and turning she beheld David McCullagh.

'O, I am so glad to meet you!' she answered. 'I never heard of your father's illness till last night. How is he?'

'There is not the slightest hope.'

'I was just on my way to Basinghall-street to inquire about him.'

'Lucky I saw ye, then, unless you are tired of your life. The fever is most catching; we have all been warned of the danger.'

'I suppose you are now coming from the house?'

'I? he repeated. 'What good could I do? He has two nurses, and the doctors, and everything of course money can buy; but it would be madness for me to be with him. I have my wife and children to consider. Fanny at first did want to go, but I told her I wouldn't hear of such nonsense. By the bye, ye've never seen her, have ye?'

'No, I have never seen her.'

'She is a "sonsy wee thing," and ye'd like her; when will ye come and take a cup of tea?'

'I don't know, I am sure, thank you; I have a great deal to do. And then, you know, we shall be going to America, when Robert sends for us.'

'Maybe it will turn out my father has left him something, though it is not very likely.'

'No, it is not very likely,' repeated Janey mechanically.

'Well, I must bid ye good-morning. When all is over I'll drop ye a line; but be sure ye don't go near the house, unless ye wish to give Robert a chance of soon taking a second wife.'

After delivering himself of which jocular and cheering remark, Mr. David McCullagh shook hands with his sister-in-law, who had, he decided, 'gone off terribly,' and walked away in the direction of the Bank.

She stood for a minute when he left her, and then all in a hurry, as if distrusting her own resolution, and desirous of putting it beyond recall, she turned sharp along London Wall, and made her way straight into Basinghall-street.

The front door of the old house stood wide as usual, and business seemed being attended to in the office, which Janey entered without ceremony.

'Mr. Roy,' she said, walking up to the counting-house, where Mr. McCullagh had been wont to sit. As she spoke, the manager lifted his eyes and looked at the person addressing him.

'Presairve us!' he exclaimed; 'it's Mrs. Robert! O mem, and it's a changed and sorrowful house ye've entered.'

'I never heard a word of the illness till last night, or I should have been here before; and now I have come to nurse him.'

'Ye don't know what your saying, Mrs. Robert.'

'Yes, I do,' she answered. 'I am going to stop here till Mr. McCullagh is better or worse. He won't know me, and if he did it would not matter much.'

'But it's a deathly fever; the doctors say it is most virulent.'

'I can't help that; my husband's father sha'n't die without one belonging to him at his side while I am near enough to take my place there.'

'The children, though, Mrs. Robert—the children?'

'They will be seen to. Which is the room? Stay, before I go in I want to write a note to Mr. Mostin. Will you send it round to him?'

'I will. But, dear mem, won't ye take a thought first for yourself?'

'I have,' she replied; 'I feel sure I am going to do what I ought to do, and for the rest we are in the hands of God.'

'And may He bring ye safe through the ordeal!' said Mr. Roy solemnly.

'Amen,' murmured Janey. Just for a moment the thought of husband and children dimmed her eyes; but the next she was tracing a few lines to Alfred Mostin, which Mr. Roy promised should be despatched to North-street at once; then, removing her shawl and bonnet, and asking Alick to take them up-stairs, she left the office, crossed the hall, turned the handle of the left-hand door, and entered the room where Mr. McCullagh lay.

It was done! No use in any one attempting to dissuade her now.

She crossed that portion of the apartment which Mr. McCullagh had utilised for his private office, and, passing behind the partition, which did not reach to the ceiling,

stood for a second looking at the scene before her.

On a small table an elderly woman was arranging some medicine-bottles, glasses, and so forth; while beside the bed there stood two doctors looking attentively at their patient, who lay apparently exhausted, flushed, unshaven, almost unrecognisable.

The whole of the furniture was of the poorest and oldest description, the bedclothes were tossed and tumbled, while the hands and arms stretched wearily out over the coverlet were thin and wasted to a degree.

Involuntarily Janey moved a step forward, and as she did so one of the medical men turned and beheld her with surprise.

She did not hesitate then, but walked close up beside the couch.

'I am the wife of Mr. McCullagh's eldest son,' she said, in a low voice, 'and I have come to nurse your patient. I know there is great danger, but I am not afraid. Tell me what you wish done, and I will try to do it.'

In a few words they told her exactly how the case stood. They might call it hopeless; but still while life remained there was a chance, though a poor one. They seemed glad she was come, indeed the elder expressed some regret she had been unable to come before.

'I did not know anything of the illness till last night,' she answered.

'That poor creature is quite worn out,' said one of the medical men, indicating the woman Janey soon understood to be Mr. McCullagh's housekeeper.

'Then she had better go and have a few hours' sleep,' was the prompt reply; 'I can see to everything that is wanted.'

'I hope to send in an experienced nurse this afternoon.'

'I am afraid we shall need her.'

It was like a dream: without the knowledge or consent of one of Mr. McCullagh's family she had taken the control in his sick-room, and even while she talked in whispers was changing the aspect of the apartment.

When her father-in-law moaned and moved his head uneasily, with quick deft hand she moved the pillow, so as to enable him to rest more comfortably.

With cool clean handkerchief she wiped the cracked swollen lips, and then moistened them with a refreshing liquid the doctor indicated. Noiselessly she glided about the room, clearing useless articles away—cloths, phials, jugs, plates, basins—all the lumber illness seems ever to collect about it. In ten minutes after the doctors were gone she had everything taken from the apartment which was not actually required; already it seemed more airy.

'I wish either that partition was down or that we had the bed on the other side of it,' she sighed; for there was no fireplace in the part Mr. McCullagh had reserved to himself for a bedchamber.

She was alone with him now; she had sent the weary housekeeper up-stairs; she had borrowed a cap and an apron, to identify herself more fully with the character of a nurse; she had sprinkled the floor with some disinfectant; she had bathed the palms of his hands, and placed cold cloths upon his forehead; she had made everything as neat and comfortable and clean in the time as was possible, and had just sat down to wait the next attack of delirium, when a knock came to the door, and opening it cautiously, she saw Alfred Mostin.

'O, why have you come? what are you doing here?' she asked.

'I have come to look after you,' he answered; 'I wish I had bit-

ten my tongue out before I told you he was ill. However, that can't be helped now: I shall stop in the house, so as to take my turn in the watching. No, you need not say one word. I promised Bob to take care of you, and I sha'n't stir from my post while you are likely to want assistance.'

'But the children, Alfred! the children!' cried Janey.

'Mrs. Mostin, Bob's step-grandmother, if a woman ever stood in such a relationship, is with them. Don't be afraid; she will see to them far better than I could have done. And now what do you think of him?'

'He is very bad indeed,' she answered. 'Look!' and she drew him where he could see the bed.

'Poor old chap!' said Alf Mostin, looking almost pitifully at the recumbent figure, 'I am afraid it is all up with him.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ALL MR. McCULLAGH WANTED.

THOSE only who through the night-watches have all alone kept vigil beside the sick are competent to speak of the terrible solitude which broods over the hours of darkness. The professional nurse, the paid attendant, or gratuitous 'sister,' knows nothing of that solemn desolation which enters into the very soul of the woman who honestly remains awake; who neither drops off nor nods, but sits with wide-open eyes, ready at any moment to moisten the parched lips; to smooth the crumpled pillow; to give needful medicine; to touch with the assurance of warm living help the hand flung wildly, restlessly about in search of something it fails to reach; to wipe the clammy forehead and speak tender words, which even, if

whispered in answer to the ravings of delirium, soothe the restlessness of fever, and lessen the fear and horror of a struggle man happily remembers little concerning, when from the very valley of the shadow he is brought back to life.

It was these watches Mr. McCullagh's faithful nurse took upon herself. She had seen enough of illness to be aware it is night which tries the sick and those who are supposed to look after them; that the hardest part of a nurse's duty is compressed into about six hours out of the twenty-four; that although it may be comparatively easy to obtain good help for the ailing or dying during three-fourths of the day, it is next to impossible to find a person who can be trusted to keep awake from midnight till the world begins to stir.

Never, never afterwards could Janey bear to speak of those nights when, all alone—for she would have no companion—she listened to Mr. McCullagh's ravings, and fought with death through the minutes and the hours. There is no form of illness so trying as that which produces delirium. Pain, restlessness, irritability, weakness, are each bad enough to contend against; but when everything is said which can be said, there is nothing so terrible as to listen to a person talking who is not in his right mind; to sit beside one whose speech is wandering though his body is still, who utters no connected sentence, who can understand no sensible word, but who keeps on groping and muttering through the treasure-house of the past; at each instant turning over some perfectly worthless memory, toiling over roads long left behind, recalling people dead and gone years and years before, babbling concerning events that had better have been

permitted to lie at the very bottom of the waters of oblivion.

In all the revelations Mr. McCullagh made, there was no sin or shame. Amid all the useless rags he turned over in the past, none he need have dreaded being seen of men was exposed to view. Nevertheless, the experiences Janey listened to were, as a rule, petty; the objects unconsciously revealed seemed to her mean and petty, the aims low, the motives sordid. Nothing great, or lofty, or pathetic, or grand, broke the terrible monotony of these dreadful nights. Now he was a small boy wading in the 'tide' at Greenock; again he was in Arran, walking with some 'lassie' with 'lint white locks' he had much to say concerning; sometimes the troubles of his married life came uppermost; but as a rule his worst and most constant ravings were about Robert and Pousnett and herself.

For the first time she really understood the length and breadth of the dislike Mr. McCullagh had conceived for her. Through all the broken sentences, the almost incoherent talk, the wild ravings, and the weak murmurs of prostration, that one theme was clearly recognisable. She heard herself derided, misjudged, calumniated; found how truly the sufferer believed she 'had parted him and his son,' who would 'have come to like his old father some day.'

It was more than she had bargained for, this frank exposition of her own shortcomings and imaginary iniquities, this unreserved statement of a hatred which it seemed to her nature impossible she could feel towards any one; and it would be idle to deny that, worn and sorrowful as she was, the iron entered into her very soul. Some day it might even be Robert himself would come to think she had destroyed his pros-

pects; for Mr. McCullagh talked at intervals much about his money, and declared, till she grew weary of the iteration, that not one penny of it should go to Robert, or Robert's children.

Hour by hour her task seemed to grow heavier, her burden more intolerable; yet still it was with the tenderest devotion, the sweetest patience, she kept on at her post. If she had been his own daughter she could not have done more to try to lessen his sufferings. Nothing love could suggest, or thoughtfulness supply, did she permit him to lack; the thousand little luxuries those who have money, or the command of money, can obtain to soothe the agonies of bodily sickness, she begged Mr. Roy to procure—each, perhaps, but a trifle, in the aggregate not of much account, yet tending to make that awful period when the body lay stretched on the rack of pain, and the mind was wandering hither and thither like a troubled spirit, restlessly looking back over the events of time, while pacing with trembling fear the shore of eternity, somewhat more bearable.

He hung thus for days, growing weaker and weaker; but the fever did not increase, there seemed a pause in the progress of the disease. It was as a fire might be, stayed, though not quenched; but still the doctors held out no hope, and it was the fifth night Janey had kept watch.

One of the medical men, who came in late, warned her that another crisis was at hand, and probably the next morning would terminate the suspense. A great chilliness had supervened upon the dull close weather of the last fortnight. Already Death seemed to have walked into the sick-chamber, bringing with it a sensation of icy cold.

They had managed to get Mr. McCullagh into the larger half of the room, preparing another bed, and lifting his light weight in the sheets; and now she made up a good fire, and, screening the blaze from his eyes, sat down beside him to wait for the end.

He was not delirious now; he lay still, deep sunk in sleep or stupor. She could scarcely catch the sound of his breathing; occasionally she bent over the bed, to make sure he had not died and made no sign; occasionally there was a little gasping moan, a sort of strangled sobbing sound, as though breath was failing him. The silence after the babble of delirium seemed terrible: when it grew unendurable she rose softly, and walking to the end of the room where he formerly slept, lifted the blind and looked out into the court. High above, the stars were shining brightly; the gaslight burned steadily; the flagstones looked dry and white, as though there were frost in the air. It was the coldest time of all the night—the hour before dawn, when it is said so many die; though this statement, like many others in connection with illness, is open to question. An indescribable sadness fell over her spirits: when next she looked up at the sky, where would the man she had perilled her own life to try to save have gone? Personally she did not now hope that he would recover; it seemed to her impossible any human being should walk so far into the loneliness of the darksome valley as he had done, and yet return from death. How could she write and tell Robert that on earth he and his father would never meet more? that without a sign or message he had passed into the vast eternity! with what words should she try to give him comfort, and

say that, although unconscious, the old man had not been left alone—that she was with him when he died, that she touched the rigid hand, and knelt by his bedside, and had prayed for him, unable at that supreme moment to utter prayer or supplication for himself?

The weary time dragged on: day began to break, there were streaks of light in the sky, the fire was burning dimly, and once more she made it up, picking out the coal with thin nervous fingers, that no noise might break the stillness. She bent over him again; his breathing was lower than ever, but less painful; the moaning had ceased, that gasping sobbing she did not hear. He lay quiet, as though dead; in his coffin he would scarcely give less sign of life. Yes, the end must be very near. For the first time a great terror seemed to seize her. Should she summon help? It appeared awful to stand alone face to face with Death, to see depart into the dim mysterious land, where human footsteps may not follow, from out of which no voice can be heard, one who had not at the supreme moment a single friend near him save the woman he disliked, whose faults had been ceaselessly on his lips during the whole of his terrible illness, and whom she thought mournfully he 'can now never, never understand.'

She moved to the door, and then paused irresolute; it would be cruel to awake the sleepers when they could do no good. Time enough when it was all over, when her part was finished, and the still heart could no longer misjudge or the cold lips blame. She returned to her post. He was still lying in the same position; she extinguished the night-lamp, and opening the shutters, let in a gleam or two of the glory of the coming day.

She had not seen the sun since she entered the house; but now, through the opening portals of the dawn, appeared rays—golden, purple, crimson—bright heralds of his approaching advent.

She looked at the sky, and marvelled where he, who now lay so quiet, would be when another morning broke. Slowly the minutes passed and the light grew stronger, and the sun arose in his majesty and shone down upon the awakening city. In the house there were sounds as if some one were stirring. Then, after all, when the end came, she need not be quite alone; and yet now it seemed to her she would prefer hearing the last sigh, seeing the last tremor, without the presence of another human being breaking in upon the awful solitude.

She did not feel afraid then; the wave of mortal terror had swept by and left her calm. There came a gentle tap on the panel of the door; when she turned the handle she found it was the house-keeper with a cup of tea.

She went out into the hall and drank it eagerly.

'How is he?' asked the woman.

'Very bad indeed, I am afraid,' was the answer; 'he has not uttered a sound for a long time—just lain like one already dead.'

'Poor dear!' said the house-keeper. Ah, it was nigh on sixty years since any one called Mr. McCullagh a 'poor dear' before.

After a time one of the doctors came. He did not speak, but looked inquiringly at Janey, who shook her head. He crossed the room and stood beside the bed, looking at the patient; then he slipped his hand underneath the sheet and felt the feeble flickering pulse.

'When did this change take place?' he asked, moving to the hearth and speaking in a whisper.

'He ceased moaning about three,' Janey replied, 'and has not stirred or moved since.'

'I will stop a little while,' said the doctor; and he laid down his hat and gloves, and cast himself into the easy-chair Robert had bought for his father when first admitted into Pousnetts'.

'Do you think—' she began, and stopped, afraid to finish her question.

'*I think there is a chance for him—stay, stay, don't break down now.*'

But already she had left the room, and in an upper chamber was on her knees, thanking God for His great mercy vouchsafed, and imploring Him to give her this life, for which she had literally wrestled with death.

Back from the very valley of darkness, as it seemed to mortal eyes, the man came slowly, lingeringly. If the illness had been bad, the recovery seemed almost worse: with feeble halting steps he returned so slowly, that hour by hour no progress seemed to be made, and it was only by looking back from the vantage-ground of days any real progress could be noticed.

Once, however, he had got what Mr. Roy tersely called 'the turn,' it was wonderful to see how anxious his children grew concerning his recovery.

All fear of infection seemed forgotten, or else, in the more burning question of whether he might not think himself neglected, that fear became of secondary importance.

First came David and Archie, then David's wife, and Archie's too; fast as the express could bring him Kenneth travelled to London after receiving a telegram stating their father was 'on the mend, and Robert's wife had been nursing him.'

This fact, of which, till David called at the house, they were all in total ignorance, stirred the family as with the sound of a trumpet. Janey in the very citadel; Janey by their father's bedside; Janey giving him his medicine; Janey feeding him like an infant; Janey and Alfred Mostin, the very two most dangerous people in the whole wide world! It was time indeed, Kenneth felt, he should take train. He had never expected to have to do so except for the funeral; but this matter was more pressing. Who knew what work had been on hand? who could ever give a guess as to how she might have been poisoning the old man's mind, 'maybe even making away with papers?' thought Mr. Johnston's son-in-law, in an agony of apprehension.

Upon this point, however, David speedily reassured him.

'When the doctors said it was fever,' he explained, 'old Roy said he took it upon him to lock up every receptacle, as what with one and another being in and out, and having liberty through the house, he could not tell what might happen.

'There's no harm done yet,' finished David significantly. 'She's dressed like any other nurse; and if she wasn't, I think he is too bad and weak, and has been too far through, to dwell much upon one more nor another; but some of us ought to be there now. He should not be left; it's dangerous.'

No lack of nurses then, whatever there might have been in the earlier stages of that terrible fever. Had the week held fourteen nights, Mr. McCullagh would not have lacked a watcher for one of them. In the opinion of his sons, no beef-tea could be too strong, or eggs too new laid, or grapes too dear, or luxury too expensive for their father. One vied with

another as to which should think of fresh delicacies likely to give him strength. Mrs. David, and Mrs. Archie, and Mrs. Kenneth were all on the spot—even Mrs. Nicol's services came into request; and if Mr. McCullagh had wanted his position changed sixty times in the hour, there would have been willing hands ready to serve his whim.

But Mr. McCullagh wanted nothing of the sort; the things he desired were precisely those he could not get—peace and quietness and the sight of a face which had vanished from out the house. At first he made two or three feeble efforts to compass his wishes; he professed often and often that he thought he could 'drop over,' when nothing was further from his feelings than sleep; and he tried to get back his former attendant by asking,

'Where's the woman used to sit wi' me in the night?'

But it was all of no use. With one accord the household professed a total inability to imagine what woman he meant. 'Was it the servant, or Mrs. Roy, or the nurse the doctor recommended?' 'No, he was sure it was none of them.'

'Well, ye mind ye were delirious most part of your time,' said Kenneth; while as for Mrs. Kenneth, 'all the arts of man,' as poor Mr. McCullagh said subsequently, would not have kept her out of his room.

'If I can't get better soon I'll go mad,' he observed to Mr. Roy; and, acting on this conviction, he set himself to work to regain his health with something of the old persistency that had won his fortune.

When he was able at last to sit up, and after a little while longer walk about his room, he said one day to Kenneth,

'If ye think it needful ye can

stay a while longer with me yourself, but I wish ye'd send your wife home. She means well, I've no doubt, and I'll be glad to see her when I am strong and hearty; but I tell ye plainly I find her a bit too much for me now.'

'I told you how it would be,' remarked Kenneth to the gushing lady, when he repeated this observation. 'Why can't you keep quiet, and not make a fool of yourself? Ye might have been of use at such a time if you had owned any sense.'

Which was extremely disagreeable on the part of Kenneth, since he himself had encouraged those 'silly ways' Mr. McCullagh's soul abhorred.

Kenneth had not been long on guard alone, a proud distinction which wearied him to death, before Mr. McCullagh began to show very palpably that his presence also could be dispensed with.

He made Mr. Roy bring the books into his private room, once more transformed into an office; and they had long confabulations, to which Kenneth was not admitted, and consultations in which he had no share.

'If you can do without me, father,' he said one day, 'I'd like to take a run down home to see how things are going on. I'll come up again almost immediately.'

'I can do without ye well enough,' agreed Mr. McCullagh readily—far, far too readily.

'David 'll look round often while I'm away.'

'I am very sure he will. Don't make yourself uneasy about me.'

Whether Kenneth followed this excellent advice or not is doubtful; but, at all events, he went. And he had not been what Mr.

McCullagh styled 'off the premises' two hours before that gentleman sent a note to Alfred Mostin's chambers, asking him to come round and see him.

To which Mr. Alfred Mostin returned a verbal answer that he could not come.

Mr. McCullagh then wrote another note, signifying that he must. Mr. Mostin returned a second verbal message which was exceedingly plain and simple in its brevity:

'Tell him that I won't.'

In high dudgeon, Mr. McCullagh sent for a cab, and, accompanied by Alick, set out for North-street.

There he found Mr. Mostin gloomily seated behind his desk.

'There wasn't one of them would tell me what I wanted to know,' began Mr. McCullagh, 'so I've come to ye. It was Robert's wife nursed me, wasn't it?'

'Yes.'

'And I saw you too, didn't I?'

'Yes.'

'I want ye to bring her to me.'

'I can't.'

'Why can't ye?'

'She wouldn't come if I asked her.'

'Then will ye take me to her?'

'I don't think you are strong enough.'

'I am well as ever I was.'

'And you won't blame me if you see what you don't like?'

'No, man; I won't blame ye, whatever it is.'

'Why, you are shaking in anticipation. Shall I send out for some wine, or you will take a drop of whisky?'

'I'll take nothing,' answered Mr. McCullagh decidedly. 'All I need is to see Robert's wife.'

'Then come along,' said Mr. Mostin; and he took his hat.

(*To be continued.*)

TWO SKETCHES FROM STIFTER.

BY HELEN AND ALICE ZIMMERN.

IN Adalbert Stifter Austrian literature possesses a true poet and an artist who painted the most exquisite cabinet pictures in words. He was born in Oberplan, Bohemia, on October 23, 1806. He was a son of the people, had passed his childhood out of doors, and drew his inspirations from actual contact with Nature. His father was a linenweaver, who owned a few cows, which his boy tended. He early showed a love for fairy tales and marionette plays; and the village schoolmaster, recognising his abilities, advised his father to give him a good education. This advice would have been followed had the father lived, but a terrible accident killed him when Adalbert was but ten years of age. An uncle, however, adopted him, and sent him to the Latin school attached to the monastery of Kremsmünster. Here he began to write verses and show a talent for landscape-painting. In 1826 he was removed to a school at Vienna, where he studied history, philosophy, and natural science, and in his leisure hours painted landscapes. When he had passed through the classes it became needful he should do something for his maintenance: he turned to teaching; and this brought him into contact with many families, among whom he soon made friends. His pupils were chiefly of noble rank: among them was Prince Richard Metternich, afterwards well known as ambassador at Paris. To him, as to others, he taught mathematics and phy-

sics, in which sciences he excelled. His leisure moments were divided between writing and painting, but he did not thrust either of these favourite occupations into notice. Accident, however, revealed to the Baroness von Münck, the mother of one of his pupils, that her tutor was a gifted writer. She drew attention to his talent, and procured for him an opening on the Vienna papers, in which he forthwith published some of his short tales. They found favour at once, and he was able soon after to collect them in book-form, under the title of *Studien* ('Sketches').

At the time that Stifter first wrote, Austria possessed no novelists; her literature was altogether at a low ebb. Political oppressions had much to do with this; it was so easy to offend against Metternich's stifling restrictions. The severe and suspicious censorship scented contraband in even the most innocent productions. There was no encouragement to write, every encouragement to keep silent. Such authors as could not be repressed had to publish their works out of the country. Stifter's writings, however, could not offend the most narrow-minded autocrat.

Stifter was happy in naming his stories 'Sketches,' for they are artists' memoranda rather than rounded works of art. Here a favourite bit is drawn with detailed care, there one of less interest is lightly touched in. His writings all bear the character of landscape-painting; they are pictures of still life, in which scenery

plays the chief part, and man a subordinate figure. There is not much action in his stories, which are told in a calm narrative tone, that never grows dramatic even in dramatic situations. His heroes are the woods, the wide-stretching moorlands, the Austrian alps, the sombre Bohemian forests with their still tarns, the Moldau with its rocky banks and ruined castles. These had been graven in on his boyish mind, and these early impressions recur in his writings. His native country was his Muse. Naturalist, artist, and poet in one, his wonderful knowledge of Nature was employed with artistic perception and appreciation. Every little trait was familiar to him; hence every touch is true, detailed to the smallest minutiae. His descriptions are never tedious, for they are filled with an animated sincere delight in Nature which is infectious. It is not a cold observer, it is a lover, that describes. While exact to Nature, he never lapses into a scientific tone; the poet hovers over all, and gilds all hard angles, all crude realities. Neither in avoiding this danger does Stifter fall into the opposite one. The anthropomorphic conceptions that pervade too many of our modern delineations of Nature are absent with him. He does not attribute to her a soul or psychological motives; he puts nothing into her that is not there. She is real, true, tangible, objective, healthy in his pages; his objectivity is quite classical in character, and recalls the *Bucolics* of Virgil in their happy simplicity of wording.

Stifter did not wholly confine himself to his own age. *Der Hochwald*, of which the scene is laid in the Austro-Bohemian mountains, deals with the Thirty Years' War. In *Witiko* he attempted to write an historical

novel. This was a mistake; such a form of writing did not suit his style or mode of handling. The *Nachsommer* was a novel in three volumes, the longest work from his pen. It tells of an attempt to create an earthly paradise in the midst of roses, lakes, and alps, far removed from the distracting haunts of men, where only harmonious and agreeable surroundings shall prevail, and all the ugly details of life are to be banished from sight and knowledge. The attempt succeeds apparently, and it would appear that Stifter did not doubt its feasibility; but the effort is too perceptible to the reader. An atmosphere of forced quietism, a calm but deadening air, fills this Utopia, which is an Austrian country version of some of our modern pre-Raphaelite experiments.

Stifter is not at his best in this novel. His style, too, had fallen into some of the mannerisms that spoil his later works. It is in his six volumes of *Studien* that we get him at his best; and Stifter's best is very good indeed. His masterly language is simple, noble, clear; never rhetorical, never uneven, always chastened and subdued in tone.

Stifter's life was as quiet as his writings. He had married, and was happy in his home. In 1846 the Government appointed him school-inspector at Linz, a post he filled till weak health forced him to retire in 1865. From that time till his death, which occurred in Linz, Austria, on January 28, 1868, he lived a retired existence, devoted to scientific and literary work, to painting and horticulture. In him Austria lost one of the most notable representatives of her literature, a master of prose, a lover of all things good and beautiful. Following are two of his 'Sketches':

THE BALLOON ASCENT.

In order to avoid the presence of any uncalled-for spectators, the ascent took place at early dawn. The beautiful girl stood by looking on with suppressed excitement while the balloon was being filled. She could scarcely control her beating heart, and the foreboding expectation of the things that were to come. For such bystanders as there were, it was an anxious moment when the insignificant-looking silk swelled into a gigantic ball, and tightened the mighty cords with which it was confined to earth. Curious instruments and contrivances were fastened into the compartments of the car. A fine tall man—usually he was gentle, cheerful, and good-humoured, but to-day pale and grave—went round the machine several times, and tested its soundness at various points. At length he asked the girl whether she persisted in her desire; and on her answering 'Yes,' he gave her a strange look of admiration, and helped her deferentially into the car, remarking, that he would not weary her by a repetition of the warnings which he had given her a fortnight before, since she had doubtless well considered them. He waited a few moments, and as no answer came, he also got in. An old man was the last to enter; she took him to be some gray-headed scientific assistant.

Now every one was ready, and the machine prepared. Cornelia cast one more glance towards the trees of the garden that stood around masked in the morning mist, and looked on. Then, from the lips of her companions, sounded the cry: 'Now, in God's name, let the good Condor fly—loosen the ropes!' It was done; the thousand invisible arms of the air seized and propelled the

gigantic ball; it trembled, staggered, tottered for a moment, then gently rising, it loosened the little car from the motherly lap of earth, and, gaining speed with every breath, it shot at last with an arrow's swiftness right up into the morning stream of light. In a moment the flames of the morning sun darted on to the ball and among the ropes. Cornelia was startled, and thought the whole balloon was on fire; for the lines of the ropes stood out like glowing rods against the indigo-blue heavens, and its dome shone like a gigantic sun. The retreating earth was still quite black and indistinguishable, fading away into darkness. Far in the west, on a bank of mist, lay the fading moon. Thus they soared, higher and higher, gaining a wider and wider vista. Two hearts—and, perhaps, the third old one too—were beating high at the grandeur of the moment. The rolls of sublimity were beginning to be unfurled, and the conception of space began to tell with all its power. The sailors were just rising towards a whole archipelago of clouds, which, at that very moment, were scattering their morning roses upon the earth; but up here were only white gleaming icy lands, swimming in the terribly blue brooks of the air, and cleft by abyesses and cracks that yawned towards the ship. And as they came nearer, the icy lands stirred and moved as white wavy mists. At that instant the sun rose over the earth, and this earth became once more visible in the distance. It still wore the accustomed motherly aspect, such as we behold it from lofty mountain peaks, only that it was blushing sweetly under its network of morning sunbeams.

'How far, Coloman?' asked the aeronaut.

'Almost the height of Mont Blanc,' replied the old man; 'rather over 14,000 feet, my lord.'

'It is well.'

At these words Cornelia peeped cautiously over the edge of the car, and bent her looks straight down through the airy abyss on to the dear earth left behind, now glimmering with light, to see whether she could discover any known spot. But, behold, all strange, the familiar habitable aspect was already gone, and with it the little links that bind us to some loved spot which we call home. Like great shadows the woods stretched out towards the horizon, a wonderful structure of mountains spread far and wide like crowding waves, inclining towards bare spots that were probably plains. Only a stream was distinctly visible, a thin trembling silver thread, such as is often seen on a dark heath in late autumn. A strange yellow light seemed to float over the whole.

When she withdrew her eyes from below, she met Lord Richard's calm glance, which reassured her. He was adjusting a telescope, and was setting it firm.

The balloon travelled westward, borne along by a gentle current of air without rising. For the last twenty minutes the mercury in the tube had fallen no further. The two men were occupied with their instruments; Cornelia pressed her wraps more tightly about her, and shrank into the corner of her seat. The flowing air played round her curls, and the vessel rocked gently.

The silence was broken by the monotonous utterances of the men, as the one dictated while the other wrote. Once upon the horizon there appeared in the nebulous distance immense shimmering snowfields, which Cornelia could not comprehend.

'It is the Mediterranean, dear madam,' said Coloman; 'and we only want to pump a few more samples of air into the compartments, and to test the electricity up here, and then you shall see the surface look still more beautiful—no longer silver, but of pure sparkling gold.'

Meantime the young aeronaut had filled a vial with strong coffee, and placed it in unslacked lime, on which he poured water, and thus warmed the fluid. He then added a little rum, and handed the young girl a glass of this hot and heating drink. In the intense cold she felt the beneficent effect instantly flowing like new life through her nerves. The men drank also. Then they whispered together, and the younger nodded. Hereupon the elder began to empty sacks of sand, which stood in the car, out over its sides. The Condor swayed in its air-bath, and with its namesake's mighty wings it swung itself, slowly and solemnly, into the highest ether. Here the scene underwent a sudden and overwhelming change.

Cornelia's first glance was once more down to earth; but it was no longer the well-known home. It seemed to be reeling backwards, gleaming in a strange golden vapour; bearing on its forehead the Mediterranean, like a narrow shining band of gold; it swam along over unknown fantastic masses. The startled girl turned away her eyes as though she had seen a monster; but about their boat too whirled far around thin white shrouds, which when seen from the earth are the fleecy clouds of heaven. Up to this heaven she now turned her gaze wistfully; but, lo, it was no longer there! The whole vault of heaven, the beautiful blue bell over our earth, had become a black abyss of

measureless limitless depth. That gladness which we enjoy so thoughtlessly below, the full flood of light upon our beautiful earth, had completely vanished up here. As if in mockery, the stars became visible—tiny impotent golden specks, scattered at random through the solitude; and the sun too—a threatening star, without warmth, without rays, a sharply-outlined disk of wavy swollen metal smelted to a white heat. Thus it glared forth from the abyss with destructive lustre, and yet without retaining a breath of light in these empty regions. Only on to the balloon and car shone a glaring light that marked off the machine in a spectral manner from the surrounding night, and gave a deathly hue to the faces of its occupants, as though they were seen in a magic-lantern.

And yet, though fancy could scarcely grasp it, it was our own dear gentle air in which they were sailing, the same air that to-morrow will fan the infant's cheeks. As the old man remarked, the balloon was entering the upper trade-wind, and must be moving along with terrible speed, as was proved by the very slanting position of the ship, and by the powerful pulling and tugging at the silk, which, in spite of all, gave forth no louder sounds than a child's whining; for the domain of sound was at an end too up here; and when the ship turned away from the sun there was nothing, nothing but the dreadful stars, looking like ghosts that walk by day.

Now, after a long silence, two lips, pale as snow, opened and spoke in low frightened tones, 'I am giddy.'

But they did not hear her. She wrapped her furs more tightly round her to keep off the cold that was shaking her with ague-like

force. The men were still working at things she did not understand; only the young, handsome, appalling man seemed to her now and anon to turn his majestic gaze towards the magnificent darkness, and play, post-like, with danger and grandeur. Not one sign of emotion was perceptible in the old man.

After a long, long time of oblivion, the younger man at length bent his face towards the girl to see how she was. She was staring around her with calm senseless eyes, and on her lips stood drops of blood.

'Coloman,' he cried, as loudly as he could up here, 'Coloman, we must descend; the lady is very unwell.'

The old man rose from his instruments and looked towards her. It was a look full of wrath, and his countenance was deeply indignant. With a voice of startling strength he exclaimed,

'I told you so, Richard; woman cannot endure the heavens. The undertaking that has cost so much is now incomplete. Such a splendid journey! The easiest and calmest of my whole life is lost for nothing. We must descend, it is true, otherwise the girl will die. Open the valves!'

After these words he sat down again, seized a rope, and drew together the folds of his cloak. The younger man gave a sharp tug to a green silken cord; and, like a giant falcon, the Condor plunged down a hundred fathoms through the air, and then sank slowly more and more.

The lord held the fainting Cornelia in his arms.

THE HEATH.

In the real sense of the word, it is not a heath to which I want to lead my dear reader and listener,

but a sad, lovely little spot of country far from our town, which is called the Heath, because from time immemorial nothing but short grass has grown upon it, with here and there a stem of heath-fir or dwarf-birch, on which occasionally hangs a lock of wool, torn from one of the few sheep and goats who now and then wander about. Besides these there was a plentiful sprinkling of juniper-bushes, but no other ornament, unless we count as such the distant mountains, which formed a beautiful blue band round the dimly-coloured landscape.

But as it often happens that melancholy persons, in whose hearts Nature has implanted wondrous poetry and strange feelings, seek out and love just such spots because they can there give full vent to their dreams and their inner music, so it was the case too with this heath. Thus a black-eyed boy of ten or twelve years very often came here with his sheep and goats, nominally to tend them; but when the animals separated, the sheep to pluck the short aromatic grass, the goats (for whom in truth there was no suitable food) to follow their own reflections and enjoy the fresh air, while every now and then plucking at a soft sprig, he would begin to make acquaintance with all the various creatures that the heath bred, and enter into an alliance and friendship with them.

There was a slight eminence on the heath, on which the gray stone, another part owner of the tract, was found in larger quantities. It pushed itself out to view, and even formed an overhanging mass, with a place of shelter and an orator's tribune. The juniper, too, crowded more closely at this spot, spreading out into many-branched kindred, and near it

grew many a pretty flowering thistle. But just here there were no trees far and wide, on which account the view was more beautiful than at other points, especially towards the south, where the distant marsh, so unhealthy for its inhabitants, so beautiful to the beholder, floated in a blue mist out into all the grades of distance. The spot was called the Horse Mountain; why, none knew, since within the memory of man no horse had ever been here; indeed, it would have been far too expensive a luxury for the heath.

It was to this spot that our little friend liked best to stray, even if his charges had wandered far away on their various business. He knew from experience that not one of them would leave the party, and he always brought them together at last, however far he might have to seek for them. Indeed the actual search was an adventure to him, especially when he had to wander far and wide. On the eminence of the Horse Mount he established his kingdom. Beneath the overhanging block he gradually formed a seat, by building or scooping with sharp stones. At first it was only large enough for one, but at last it grew roomy enough for three. A few shelves were discovered or made in other convenient nooks and crannies, where he placed his leathern heath-pouch, his bread, and the countless heath-treasures which he collected and brought up here. There was society in plenty. In the first place, there were the many great blocks of stone that formed his castle, all well known, and named by him, each of a different colour and aspect; not to mention the countless little ones, which were often even more varied and brightly coloured. He divided the large ones according as they delighted him by their

oddity or annoyed him by their vulgarity; he loved all the little ones. Then there was the juniper, an obstinate fellow, of invincibly tough limbs when he was to let go a beautiful sweet-scented shepherd's crook, or make room for a road to be constructed. His branches were thick-set with thorns; nevertheless they were all covered with gifts of honour, which he presented all the year round to the numerous heath-guests, in the shape of a million millions of blue and green berries. Then there were the wondrous heath-flowers, burning fire-coloured or sky-blue, between the sunny grass of the stones, and those countless little blossoms sprouting among the juniper, which open a little white beak and show a little yellow tongue. Many a strawberry, too, might be found; also some raspberry-bushes; and there actually grew between the stones a long hazel-rod. Nor was bad company wanting either, which he knew from his father to be such even when it was beautiful. For instance, here and there, but rarely, grew the herb Paris, which he only spared because it was of such shining blackness, as black as nothing else on the whole heath, except his own eyes, which, it is true, he could not see.

We ought scarcely to speak now of the living and moving company; there is so much without them. But this is the most excellent company. I will not mention the thousand upon thousand golden, ruby, and emerald creatures and worms which climb, run, and work about on stone, grass, and stalk, because of gold, ruby, and emeralds he knew nothing yet but what the sky and the heath displayed to him. But of other creatures I must speak. There were his favourites, the creaking purple-winged grasshop-

pers, who flew up in dozens before him when he traversed his domains; there were his countless cousins, the greater and lesser locusts, Heyducs clad in dull-green garbs, chirping and dancing merrily and ceaselessly, so that on sunny days there was a quivering sing-song along the whole length of the heath. Then there were the snails, with and without houses, brown and striped, rounded and flat; and they drew silvery paths along the grass or over his felt hat, on which he liked to place them. Then there were the flies—humming, buzzing, fizzing—blue, green, or glass-winged; the humble-bee, that hissed sleepily past; and the butterflies, especially one tiny one with sky-blue wings, silver-gray beneath, marked with such pretty little eye-like spots. Then there was another still smaller kind, with wings of pure sunset red. Finally, there were the birds which sang in many places: the yellow-hammer, the robin-redbreast, the wood-lark, that often filled the whole heavens with church music; the greenfinch also, the hedge-sparrow, the plover, and many more. All their nests lay in his domain, and were sought out and guarded. Many a small field-mouse would he watch slipping along, and spared it when it suddenly stood still and looked up at him with its little, shining, frightened eyes. Of wolves and other dangerous depredators not one had been heard of from time immemorial under all his ancestors, with the exception of egg-sucking weasels, with which he waged war to the knife.

In the midst of all these delights he stood, walked, or sprang, or sat, a splendid child of the heath. From his dark-brown little face, full of goodness and sense, shone out in flashing un-

conscious brightness his coal-black eyes, loving and bold, betraying that dangerous element which had been granted to him, and was beginning to sprout in the solitude of the heath—a dark fiery fantasy. Around his forehead a wilderness of dark-brown hair was artlessly abandoned to the winds of the plain. If it were permitted to me, I would compare my little favourite with that shepherd lad in Holy Writ, who also found his heart, his God, and his dreams of future kingly greatness upon the heath of Bethlehem. But I do not think that shepherd lad could have been quite as poor as our little friend, who had nothing the whole day long but a good-sized piece of black bread, with which, strangely enough, he managed to nourish his blooming body and still more blooming soul. He had, besides, some clear cool water that gushed forth hard by the Horse Mount, filled a little well, and then hastened swiftly along the heath to join its sisters, and, united to them, hurried towards that distant marsh of which we have spoken. In good times he had a goat-cheese or two in his pouch. But one source of nourishment he had in plenty, which the wealthiest town-dweller cannot command—a whole ocean of the most wholesome air around him, and a fulness of light to ripen colour and health above him. In the evening, when he came home, his mother would cook him a dish of milk-soup or good millet-broth. His dress was made of half-bleached linen. He further possessed a broad felt hat, which, however, he seldom wore, and generally hung up in his castle on a wooden peg that he had knocked into a crack in the rock.

Nevertheless he was always joyous, and sometimes could hardly contain himself for mirth.

From his regal throne he ruled over the heath. Sometimes he wandered over it far and wide; sometimes he sat up aloft on the stone block or orator's tribune, and as far as the eye could see, so far did his fantasy roam; further still sometimes, till it spanned the whole distance with a network of thoughts and imagination. And the longer he sat, the more thickly his fancies crowded, so that at last he was often himself entangled helplessly in their web. He knew no fear of solitude; and it was just when far and wide not a human being could be seen, and only the hot midday air trembled over the heath, that the whole array of his inmost fancies came trooping forth and peopled the heath. He would then often stand on the stone block and hold a sermon and speech, and below stood the kings and judges, and the people and the generals, and children and children's children, countless like the sand on the sea-shore. He exhorted them to penitence and conversion, and all hung upon his words. He described to them the promised land, declared that they would accomplish heroic deeds, and at last longed for nothing so much as that he too might perform a miracle. Then he descended, and led them forth to the most distant and remote portions of the heath, which were about a quarter of an hour's walk, showed to them the whole land of their fathers, and occupied it at the point of the sword. Then it was divided among the tribes, and each was bidden defend his own land.

Or sometimes he built Babylon—a terrible town of wide extent. He built it of the little stones of the Horse Mount, and announced to the locusts and beetles that a mighty kingdom was rising here which no one would be able to

conquer, save Cyrus, who would come to-morrow or the next day to punish the godless king Belshazzar, as Daniel had long since prophesied.

Or he turned the course of the Jordan, that is, the brook that flowed from the spring, and forced it into another channel. Or he did none of these things, but went to sleep on the open plain and let a bright-coloured carpet of dreams be woven above him. The sun looked down on him, and enticed rose-colour out of his cheeks as he slept, as beautiful and as healthy as on mellow apples, or as ripe and as strong as on full-fruited hazel-nuts; and when at length it had drawn out of his forehead great clear drops, then it took pity on the boy, and waked him with a hot kiss.

Thus he lived many a day and many a year upon the heath, and grew taller and stronger; and into his heart came deeper and darker and quieter powers. He became full of sadness and longing, and he knew not how it was

with him. He had completed his education—what the heath could give him it had given. His rich intellect now pined for its bread of knowledge, and the heart for its wine of love. His eye roamed over the distant exhalations of the marsh, and yet farther, as though out there must be something that he lacked, and as though some day he must gird his loins, take up his staff, and wander far, far away from his flock.

The meadows, the flowers, the field with its corn, the wood with its innocent little insects, are the first and natural playmates and masters of the youthful heart. You need but abandon the little angel to his own inner god and keep the demons away, and he will educate and prepare himself in wondrous wise. Then, when the fruitful heart begins to hunger for knowledge and feeling, open out to him the greatness of the world, of men, of God.

And herewith let us take leave of the boy on the heath.

DYING NEWGATE.

'It were highly to be wished that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than severity; that it would seem convinced that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishments familiar, but formidable. Then, instead of our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which enclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands, we should see, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance, if guilty, or new motives to virtue, if innocent.'—*The Vicar of Wakefield*.

'FOR the matter of that, sir, we've no record of any such person having been confined here at all.'

This was the unhesitating answer of the chief warder to my own confident request to see in the building whose demolition is but for a while postponed some memorial of the imprisonment and escapes of Jack Sheppard. Thus, thought I, must yet another cherished tradition be relinquished; whilst Ainsworth's graphic account of Jack Sheppard's second escape from Newgate (on the night of Thursday, the 15th of October 1724), illustrated with George Cruikshank's neat little etchings, goes for naught. It was but the other day that two clever authors dissipated our belief in the legend of Dick Whittington listening at the foot of Highgate-hill to the voices of Bow Bells. There may be some who take pleasure in the circumstance that the statue of Liberty with a cat at its feet, which, as Maitland tells us, stood as a memorial of Whittington in the old Newgate, has no place with those of Concord, Mercy, Justice, Truth, Peace and Plenty—its contemporaries—standing in the niches on the south-western wing of the existing structure.

The site of Newgate was the principal entrance, and one of the

oldest entrances, into later Roman London. The modern Newgate-street and Watling-street mark the course within the newer City wall of the new road that was made direct from the river Eye at Tyburn to the bridge over the Thames (London Bridge), crossing the bridge over the Fleet, and so into the City at Newgate. The part of that road without the wall is now represented by Oxford-street, High-street and Broad-street, St. Giles's, and Holborn. The older road from the west turned at the southern corner of the Edgware-road, and going along the course of the Eye down Park-lane, went through the marshes of Thorney Island to the ford across the river between Millbank and Westminster. The later road and later wall were constructed at a date which is not precisely determined. But there would seem to be small doubt that Newgate, as the position of a gate in the London Wall, is coeval with the newer wall itself, which was erected about the year 365 A.D., when Valentinian was Emperor of the West, and London had received the complimentary title of 'Augusta.' Shortly after this period the Roman forces were withdrawn from Britain to repel dangers that threatened nearer home. It is difficult to

show whence the gate derived its cognomen of 'New.' It is, in fact, one of the most ancient of the original City gates, the other three being Bishopsgate, Aldersgate, and Aldgate. The foundation of Bishopsgate is attributed to Erkenwald (Bishop and Saint) in 675 A.D. Stow tells us that Aldersgate took its name 'for the very antiquity of the gate itself, as being one of the first four gates of the City, and serving for the western parts as Aldgate for the east, which two gates are for difference's sake called the one Eald-gate and the other Aldersgate.' The making of Ealdgate (or Aldgate) followed upon the placing of a bridge across the river Lea at Stratford, which rendered necessary a gate into London from the east. Some would connect the title of 'Newgate' with the old 'Chamberlain's Gate,' which in the time of William the Conqueror stood across Newgate-street, at a spot between the now graveyard of Christ Church and hall of Christ's Hospital. That gate was pulled down in the year 1218; but the *locus* of the prison had been already transferred to the gate in the wall at Newgate. At any rate, all authorities are agreed upon the reërection in the reign of King Henry I., or that of King Stephen, of the gate-house at Newgate as a prison.

The custom of appropriating City gates to such a purpose we derived from the Romans. Fuller speaks of Newgate as being 'used for all prisoners to walk in and out of.' We read in Stow that Ludgate was the 'free prison,' and the other City gates were given up to the freemen of the City for a similar object. By a charter of the year 1400, King Henry VI. surrendered Newgate to the Corporation of London, under whose control it has since remained

until very recent times. After a lapse of nearly three hundred years, having become 'ruinous and horribly loathsome,' Newgate was reconstructed upon an extended scale in terms of the bequest in that behalf of Sir Richard Whittington, who died in the year 1423. The statues of which I have spoken were subsequently set up, with perhaps unconscious irony, in the two eight-sided flanking towers. 'Whittington's College,' as it was called, was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666, which stopped at Pie Corner, a little to the north of it. The building that took its place stood, east and west, at the northern *débouche* of the Old Bailey, its south, and principal, front looking down that street. The gate itself was also rebuilt across the western end of Newgate-street. This latter was reserved, generally speaking, for debtors. For their relief by the charitable a money-box was exposed at a grating within the reach of those passing through the northern postern. On the top of the gate was reared a great ventilating shaft. This was intended to mitigate the evils of overcrowding and uncleanness that at short intervals would break out in the dire shape of gaol-fever. In the gate were the Stone Hall and the Stone Ward. The former, facing Newgate-street, contained the large stone, upon which the condemned felons' irons were knocked off their hands and feet just before they started for Tyburn, or in later years for the gibbet in the Old Bailey. The Stone Hall also served as an exercise-ground for the inmates. Ned Ward, author of *The London Spy*, relates that 'when the prisoners are disposed to recreate themselves with walking, they go into a spacious room called the Stone Hall, where,

when you see them taking a turn together, it would puzzle one to know which is the gentleman, which the mechanic, and which the beggar, for they are all so suited in the same garb of squalid poverty, making a spectacle of more pity than executions. Only to be out at elbows is in fashion here, and a great indecorum not to be threadbare.' The Stone Ward, looking towards Holborn, was, together with the master's side in the main building, set apart for such debtors—known as 'master debtors'—as were able to defray the exorbitant fees levied by the gaolers for their 'garnish,' food and lodging. Leading out of the Stone Hall was the Iron Hold. Here the alarm-bell was sounded, and here, under the charge of four prisoners, called 'the partners,' the gyves, fetters, and handcuffs were kept and fitted on. The 'partners' acted as a watch under the turnkeys, their services in that capacity being in daily, nay hourly, requisition. Beyond lay the awful chamber styled 'Jack Ketch's kitchen.' In its two large caldrons the hangman boiled, in a compound of tar, pitch, and oil, the limbs of those who were executed and quartered for treason, before fixing them upon the spikes at London Bridge and the City gates. The 'kitchen' was situated between the female debtors' ward above, and a wretched cell, 'Tangier,' beneath. In a lower depth still, underground, and unlighted, was the Stone Hold. 'Built and paved with stone, without beds or any other sort of protection from the cold, this dreadful hole, accounted the most dark and dismal in the prison, was made the receptacle of such miserable wretches as could not pay the customary fees.' The Lower Ward adjoined the Stone

Hold, 'though in what degree of latitude it was situated,' says Ned Ward, with a happy neglect of geometrical precision, 'I cannot positively demonstrate, unless it lay ninety degrees beyond the North Pole; for instead of being dark there but half the year, it is dark all the year round.' The main building, facing the Old Bailey, included the master's side, the common side, and the Press Yard. The last-named division—which must not be confounded with the Press-room, of which I shall speak in its place—was situated behind Phoenix Court. It was devoted to State offenders, and to criminals who could be mulcted for their accommodation. So lucrative proved the profits derived from this source that Pitt, the governor, who was tried for high treason, but acquitted, on the charge of aiding Forster's escape after the '15,' had paid five thousand pounds for the privilege of farming the Press Yard. One of the Jacobites who were incarcerated at that period avers that a greater sum was charged for one room there than would have paid the rent of the best house in St. James's-square or Piccadilly for several years. Some dark and ill-ventilated wards below the ground-level composed the common side—the ordinary quarters for both malefactors and poor debtors. Two rooms, the Waterman's Hall and My Lady's Hold, were allotted to the female prisoners. From the former, being near the postern in the gate, they were permitted to beg, like the male felons, and in the same manner, of the passers-by. My Lady's Hold was in the northern portion of the main edifice. 'Neither of these wards had beds, and the unfortunate inmates were obliged to take their rest on the oaken floor. The

condition of the rooms was indescribably filthy and disgusting; nor were the habits of the occupants much more cleanly. In other respects they were equally indecorous and offensive.' The Condemned Hold had been originally the southern postern of the gate. Its oak floor was studded with staples, hooks, and ring-bolts, having heavy chains attached to them. It was a large room, lighted by only one little grated unglazed aperture. The chapel was in the south-eastern corner of the prison; the Press-room was next to the Waterman's Hall. The Press-room contained a ponderous engine for the pressing to death such prisoners as refused to plead in the dock. The wretched sufferer was placed, face upwards, with his extremities fastened to four posts at the corners of a nine or ten feet square. The weights descended upon him from a rack and frame above. A little bread and water were given to him, just enough to preserve sensibility, until he either answered or succumbed in death. Walter Calverly, of Calverly in Yorkshire, having murdered two of his children, and stabbed his wife in a transport of jealousy, being arraigned for his crime at York Assizes, stood mute. He was thereupon ordered to be pressed to death in the castle, a large iron weight being placed upon his breast. This was on the 5th of August 1605. At Newgate, a Major Strangways suffered death by the same means in 1657, for the murder of his brother-in-law, one Mr. Fussell. This form of punishment, worthy only of the Inquisition, was sometimes voluntarily undergone by offenders, as affording the only expedient by which their estates could be inherited by their children. Dating from the reign of King Henry III., it was not removed

from our statute-book before the year 1770.

The course of life within the prison I have described, and which was perpetuated, in a but slightly modified degree, in its successor, needs no lengthy rehearsal here. Contemporary writings abound with mention of the disease, debauchery, and fellowship in vice that ran riot inside its walls. A cellar on the common side, lighted only by candles and a fire—like that which Hogarth painted in his betrayal and arrest of the idle apprentice—was the favourite scene of wild orgies, which had, and could have, but one result—the certain contamination of the innocent with the hopeless degradation of the guilty. A faithful picture of what would occur even at the very entrance of a prisoner into such a gaol is given by Goldsmith. Speaking by the mouth of Dr. Primrose, he says: 'I expected upon my entrance to find nothing but lamentations, and various sounds of misery; but it was very different. The prisoners seemed all employed in one common design—that of forgetting thought in merriment or clamour. I was apprised of the usual perquisite required upon these occasions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being all exhausted. This was immediately sent away for liquor, and the whole prison was soon filled with riot, laughter, and profaneness.' Moreover, the pestilent air spread sickness around, even to beyond the precincts. To cite one instance out of many: it is on record that Akerman, the governor, in his evidence before a Committee of Inquiry in 1770, stated that twenty years previously several of the jury, two judges, the Lord Mayor, and others, to the

number of sixty and more, were carried off by a fever which broke out in the gaol.

The reconstruction of Newgate was begun in the year 1770. The works were still incomplected ten years later, when the 'No Popery' rioters attacked the prison. On the 6th of June 1780 the mob proceeded thither to demand the release of their companions, seized whilst demolishing the Roman Catholic chapel at the corner of Duke (now Sardinia) street, Lincoln's-inn-fields. Mr. Akerman, whom Boswell speaks of as his 'esteemed friend,' went to ask the Lord Mayor's permission to yield to their demands, but returned to find 'all the prisoners released and Newgate in a blaze.' Crabbe, then a lad, describes the appearance and helplessness of the prisoners upon their unexpected freedom. In a letter to Mrs. Thrale under date [Friday] the 9th of June 1780, Dr. Johnson writes: 'On Wednesday [7th June] I walked with Dr. Scot to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins, with the fire yet glowing. As I went by the Protestants were plundering the Sessions House at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place.' That same night (7th June) the mob opened the Fleet, King's Bench, Marshalsea, the Wood-street (Poultry) Compter, and Clerkenwell prisons, setting the first two in flames. It is diverting to read of John Wilkes (who once wittily disclaimed ever to have been a *Wilkite*) declaring as one who, slyly observes Dr. Johnson, was always zealous for order and decency, that were he intrusted with the power he

would not leave a rioter alive. Lord George Gordon himself died in Newgate, thirteen years after these events, of gaol fever. He was then imprisoned for a libel upon Queen Marie Antoinetta. No memorial of him can be found here, whilst the house at the King's Bench Prison, Southwark, in which he was confined after the riots (and Wilkes before him), has likewise disappeared. That prison was pulled down about two years ago. The injuries repaired, the new prison of Newgate assumed in 1780 its present outward aspect. Designed by George Dance, the architect of the Mansion House, it is undeniably one of the best public buildings in the metropolis. The first stone was laid by the celebrated Alderman Beckford, who was then Lord Mayor. Putting aside the historical associations of the spot, the ultimate overthrow of the structure is to be deplored, especially as another of its kind must perforce be supplied. Nothing could more fittingly answer the end for which it was built. There is something very imposing and impressive in the two windowless blocks, each ninety feet square by fifty feet high, and each with a grim massive portal, hung with chains, at its side. The governor's house in the middle lends relief to a gloomy front extending to a length of 297 feet. The governor's house is thirty feet in width, though it looks wider; the later superposition of an additional floor above the entablature, with its boldly projecting cornice, was a felicitous amendment. 'Old times were changed, old manners gone,' since the setting up over the former lodge of a sundial bearing the crudely realistic motto, '*Venio sic fur*.' The statues on the southern wing, however, harmonise but ill with

it and the Sessions House. The latter occupies the site of the old Surgeons' Hall, where attempts were occasionally made to recall to life executed criminals. The judges' dining-room over the Sessions House gave rise to Pope's couplet, borrowed, though, from Congreve :

'The hungry judges' soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine.'—*Rape of the Lock*, canto iii.

Hardly any part remains, with the exception of one or two fine pieces of wall of the former building. The 'condemned cells' are said to have been the last to disappear. Scarcely did any place, even within Newgate, better merit its opprobrious designation.

Entering by the low spiked wicket, so familiar to all passengers in the Old Bailey, the visitor passes through the warders' common-room into a dark narrow passage which, running north and south, communicates with every part of the interior. In front, on the right hand, is a gallery opening into a small, comfortable-looking room fitted with a press, a safe for the keys, and a leaden cistern bearing the date 1781. In the press are kept a variety of disused handcuffs and leg-irons, some of them being of a great thickness and weight. The leg-irons, when worn, hung from an iron belt round the culprit's waist. In the cupboard are also preserved the block, with its hammer, upon which the prisoner would place his feet that his chains might be fastened on, and unriveted just before his execution; with the axe, that was carried to the scaffold in front of the condemned under sentence for treason. This axe has never been actually used for the purpose of decapitation after death. The head was severed by a skilled surgeon. The

last time the axe went to the scaffold was on Monday, 1st May 1820, when Thistlewood, Brunt, Ings, Davidson, and Tidd, principals of the Cato-street conspiracy, were executed according to the horrid manner of traitors. In this apartment, too, malefactors were pinioned by the hangman. That operation is now performed in the condemned cell, with a set of straps of ingenious construction. The place of execution for Middlesex has been at Newgate since 1783, and until a few years ago before the door in the more northerly portal. The 'procession' so frequently described in the daily journals used to start from the pinioning-room down the passage, through the kitchen, passing between black curtains put up for the occasion, and so out into the Old Bailey. The gibbet, or scaffold, was brought overnight from its place in the Sessions House yard; the staples to which it was fastened may yet be seen at either side of the outer iron door of the kitchen. The dissection of the bodies of executed persons was discontinued in the year 1832. Casts are now taken of their faces; these, arranged in a lobby of the warders' room, are by no means pleasant to look upon, though not without their value from a physiologist's point of view. The chapel, where divine service is celebrated every day, is on the first floor, at the rear of the governor's house. In the *Microcosm* is a plate by Rowlandson and Pugin of its interior (since considerably changed) in the year 1809, on a Sunday preceding the day of execution. Sunday being a *dies non* in the eyes of the law, it was then customary to hold capital trials on Fridays, and to give the condemned the full benefit of the few hours' grace meted out in sen-

tence. In this picture two of the felons are women ; they all sit in the black 'condemned pew' on the floor of the chapel, a coffin in front of them. The pew and trestles gave way a few years afterwards to a large stove ; but a prisoner under sentence of death still sits apart from the rest, upon a black-leather chair by the pulpit. The women's gallery has a set of jalousies through which they can see the officiating chaplain, but are themselves visible to no one else in the chapel. Along the eastern side of the long passage are the glazed boxes in which prisoners awaiting trial consult with their legal advisers. Nothing can be heard, but everything can be seen, that passes between them. At the northern end of the passage are the cages for the prisoners' interviews with their friends. These are so devised that nothing can be handed from the one side to the other ; a warder is always present in a gangway between. In 1857 a part of the interior was reërected upon a plan adapted to the reformatory system. The cells were ranged in galleries at the northern end, along Newgate-street. They call for no particular remark beyond that, contrasted with what the prisoners formerly had to endure, they are luxury indeed. The condemned cell at the north-western corner of the prison is twice as large as any of the others, since a warder is constantly in attendance on a prisoner directly sentence of death is pronounced. Here the prisoner sleeps upon a wooden bedstead instead of a slung hammock. One of our party, with misplaced bravado, declared that were a warder to be put over him under such circumstances he would strangle him forthwith. But our guide said the whole atmosphere and sur-

roundings of the gaol were calculated, as he expressed it, to 'throw a wet blanket over a man.' Looking around, his words carried conviction with them. Every lady's attention is directed to the large board inscribed 'Silence' hanging in the corridor. If she retorts *that* would place no check upon *her* loquacity, she is conducted into one of the blackholes, whence, after a few minutes' duress, she will come out of the same mind with the American girl who, similarly situated, said, 'Gao-ler, I'm thinking I'll come to your terms anyhow.' The corridor communicates with the two exercising-grounds lying between the chapel-wall and the two 'day-wards and infirmary, the oldest portion of the present prison. In one of the wards is the flogging-block. Whilst everything besides in Newgate cannot be viewed without painful interest, the contemplation of this block or 'horse' gave me unqualified satisfaction. No one is fastened within it who has not richly deserved all—nay, twice—the punishment he gets. In the other ward a curious old notice-board still remains over the fireplace. It was in this ward that Mrs. Fry exercised her benevolent labours. In Buxton's *Enquiry*, 1818, which contains much interesting matter respecting the interior economy of the gaol at that period, it is stated that 'on the female side her energies were concentrated. There she found nearly three hundred women, tried and untried, some going to death, in two rooms. Here they saw their friends, and kept their multitudes of children ; and they had no other place for cooking, washing, eating, and sleeping. They slept on the floor, at times one hundred and twenty in one ward, without so much as a mat for bedding, and many of

them were very nearly naked. . . . Every one, even the governor, was reluctant to go among them.' (Other paragraphs are unquotable here.) It is said that her first efforts were spent in teaching them to sew and knit, that by selling their work these unfortunate beings might purchase themselves food. In the men's exercising-ground, its flags cut with little arrows and other marks to guide their perambulation, is a shed covering the scaffold, which, taken off its wheels, has been sunk into the ground. The mechanism for insuring the 'drop' is of a somewhat clumsy contrivance, but provision had to be made for the simultaneous hanging of two or more criminals. The prisoner stands upon a level with—formerly some seven or eight feet above—the ground, beneath the beam; upon the withdrawal of the 'bolt' he disappears from sight. Of the two communications leading into the Sessions House, one stands open to the sky, and, inclining to the south, is about fifty yards in length by seven or eight feet wide. Beneath its pavement lie the remains of those who in the very words of their sentence must be buried here. In the plaster of the two side walls are cut initial letters relating

to the several interments beneath. This passage is known to the light-hearted accustomed felon as 'Birdcage Walk,' from the iron grating overhead. Its outer boundary, running north and south, and about seventeen feet high, abuts upon Warwick-square, and is a relic of the old London wall, from its vicinity to which the 'Old Bailey' takes its name.

Such is Newgate of the present day. Just as I was about to leave, 'Black Maria' rumbled into the Sessions House yard; the tramping of many listless feet was heard through the resounding galleries, and a batch of that afternoon's delivery from the police-courts filed into the exercising-yard, a warder at their head. Emerging into the light and liberty of the public way, visions of Claude Duval and Jonathan Wild, of Captain Macheath and Lucy Lockit, floated before my eyes; snatches from the *Beggars' Opera*, mingling with the appealing cry of 'Pity the poor prisoners!' and the tolling of St. Sepulchre's bell, echoed in my ears; and involuntarily recalling Richard Baxter's exclamation on meeting a felon in the streets of Westminster, I invoked a blessing upon such names as Romilly, Buxton, and Howard.

W. E. M.

WASHINGTON IRVING'S LOVE STORY.

'I HAVE loved as I never again shall love in this world; I have been loved as I never again shall be loved.'

Ordinary readers of Washington Irving's *Bracebridge Hall* recognise in the above quotation from it nothing of the melancholy meanings it has for others who know the great sorrow of its talented author's life. Even his personal friends, who used to wonder that he had so long remained a single man, seeing how fond he was of the society of women, and how great a favourite he was with women, had but vague uncertain ideas about his having encountered in his early years some kind of disappointment in love. They never guessed how terrible a blow it really was to him.

Some few years before November 1860—the month in which, in his seventy-sixth year, he died—when sitting alone with his favourite niece, she, in a spirit of sprightly fun, began to rally him for being an old bachelor. With a faint smile of pensive tenderness upon his face, Irving at last said, 'Nature never intended me for a bachelor;' and fell into a long thoughtful silence, so evidently melancholy that she, with a girl's quick perception and sympathy, became thoughtful and silent too.

I can imagine them sitting together thus: he full of the past; she conjuring up a vision of that dear old uncle in the days of his youth, when his gentle amiability and his modest, quiet, slightly reserved manner and his sympa-

thetic nature made him a favourite with all his friends, and when too he was a lion in the literary and fashionable circles of London society.

Cyrus Redding describes him at that time as a well-made gentlemanly young man of the middle height, and of an unassuming, mild, and rather taciturn disposition; and Dr. Maginn says he had all the grace and dignity of an English gentleman, with nothing of that nasal enunciation or those peculiarities of character popularly associated with an American. Professor Felton used to dwell with enthusiasm upon his wit and social graces, and the late Charles Dickens, meeting him in the full flush and glory of his fervid genius, said, 'Washington Irving is a great fellow. We have laughed most heartily together. He is just the man he ought to be.' Lowell, his countryman, describing him in verse, wrote:

'To a true poet heart add the fun of Dick Steele,
Throw in all of Addison, minus the chill,
With the whole of that partnership,
stock, and good-will;
Mix well, and, while stirring, hum o'er
as a spell,
"The fine old English gentleman;" simmer it well,
Sweeten just to your own private liking,
then strain,
That only the finest and clearest remain;
Let it stand out of doors till a soul it receives
From the warm lazy sun, loitering down
through green leaves,
And you'll find a choice nature, not
wholly deserving
A name either English or Yankee—just
Irving.'

And Sir Walter Scott, writing to a friend, said: 'When you see

Tom Campbell, tell him, with my best love, that I have to thank him for making known to me Mr. Washington Irving, who is one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances I have made this many a day.'

To go back: presently Irving came out, as it were, from his mournful thoughts, and, producing a piece of folded paper, said to his niece, 'There's an autograph for you.'

The paper was old and discoloured, the writing upon it had faded into a rusty brown. It was a copy in Washington Irving's handwriting of his friend Campbell's beautiful verses commencing, 'What's hallowed ground?' I quote a few lines from that poem, as you may have either forgotten it or never have met with it:

'That's hallowed ground where, mourned
and missed,
The lips repose our love has kissed;
But where's the memory's mansion?
 Yon churchyard's bowers?
No; in ourselves their souls exist,
 A part of ours.

A kiss can consecrate the ground
Where mated hearts are mutual bound:
The spot where love's first links were
wound,

 That ne'er are riven,
Is hallowed down to earth profound,
 And up to heaven.

For time makes all but true love old;
The burning thoughts that then were told
Run molten still in memory's mould,
 And will not cool
Until the heart itself be cold
 In Lethe's pool.'

After the death of Irving, amongst his private papers were found some pages of an old letter, the colour of dead leaves in autumn, with a miniature of a beautiful girl, and a lock of fair hair folded in paper, on which was written in Irving's handwriting the name of Matilda Hoffman. She was the daughter of Josiah Ogden Hoffman, a lawyer of repute in New York. And with these

was a note-book of 1822, in which, for his own eye alone, was written under her name this brief record: 'She died in the beauty of her youth, and in my memory she will ever be young and beautiful.'

The above relics were in a repository, of which Irving always carried the key. The letter mentioned was imperfect, wanting both the beginning and the end. It consisted of sixteen pages, and was believed to be a copy of one written to a married lady, with whose family he was on very intimate terms. I append some extracts from it:

'We saw each other every day, and I became excessively attached to her. Her shyness wore off by degrees. The more I saw of her, the more I had reason to admire her. Her mind seemed to unfold itself leaf by leaf, and every time to discover new sweetness. Nobody knew her as well as I, for she was generally timid and silent; but I, in a manner, studied her excellence. Never did I meet with more intuitive rectitude of mind, more native delicacy, more exquisite propriety in word, thought, and action, than in this young creature. I am not exaggerating; what I say was acknowledged by all who knew her. The brilliant little sister used to say that "people began by admiring her, but ended by loving Matilda." For my part I idolised her. I felt at times rebuked by her superior delicacy and purity, and as if I was a coarse unworthy comparison.

'This passion was terribly against my studies. I felt my own deficiency, and despaired of ever succeeding at the Bar. I could study anything else rather than law, and had a fatal propensity to *belles-lettres*. I had gone on blindly like a boy in love; but I began to open my eyes

and be miserable. I had nothing in purse, nor in expectation. I anticipated nothing from my legal pursuits, and had done nothing to make me hope for public employment or political elevation. I had begun a satirical and humorous work (*The History of New York*) in company with one of my brothers; but he had gone to Europe shortly after commencing it, and my feelings had run into so different a vein that I could not go on with it. I became low-spirited and disheartened, and did not know what was to become of me. I made frequent attempts to apply myself to the law; but it is a slow and tedious undertaking for a young man to get into practice, and I had unluckily no turn for business. The gentleman with whom I had studied saw the state of my mind. He had an affectionate regard for me—a paternal one, I might say. He had a better opinion of my legal capacity than it merited. He urged me to return to my studies, to apply myself to become well acquainted with the law; and that, in case I could make myself capable of undertaking legal concerns, he would take me into partnership with him, and give me his daughter. Nothing could be more generous. I set to work with zeal to study anew; and I considered myself bound in honour not to make further advances with the daughter until I should feel satisfied with my proficiency in the law. It was all in vain. I had an insuperable repugnance to the study. My mind would not take hold of it; or, rather, by long despondency, had become for the time incapable of any application. I was in a wretched state of doubt and self-distrust. I tried to finish the work which I was secretly writing, hoping it would give me

reputation and gain me some public employment. In the mean time I saw Matilda every day, and that served to distract me.

‘In the midst of this trouble and anxiety she was taken ill with a cold. Nothing was thought of it at first; but she grew rapidly worse, and fell into a consumption. I cannot tell you what I suffered. The ills that I have undergone in this life have been dealt out to me drop by drop, and I have tasted all their bitterness. I saw her fade rapidly away, beautiful and more beautiful and more angelical to the very last. I was often by her bedside, and in her wandering state of mind she would talk to me with a sweet, natural, and affecting eloquence that was overpowering. I saw more of the beauty of her mind in that delirious state than I had ever known before. Her malady was rapid in its career, and hurried her off in two months. Her dying struggles were painful and protracted. For three days and nights I did not leave the house, and scarcely slept. I was by her when she died; all the family were assembled round her, some praying, others weeping, for she was adored by them all. I was the last one she looked upon. I have told you as briefly as I could what, if I were to tell with all the incidents and the feelings that accompanied it, would fill volumes. She was but about seventeen years old when she died.

‘I cannot tell you what a horrid state of mind I was in for a long time. I seemed to care for nothing; the world was a blank to me. I abandoned all thoughts of law. I went into the country, but could not bear solitude, yet could not enjoy society. There was a dismal horror continually in my mind that made me fear to be alone. I had often to get up

in the night and seek the bedroom of my brother, as if the having a human being by me would relieve me of the frightful gloom of my own thoughts.

'Months elapsed before my mind would resume any tone; but the despondency I had suffered for a long time in the course of this attachment, and the anguish that attended this catastrophe, seemed to give a turn to my whole character, and throw some clouds into my disposition which have ever since hung about it. When I became more calm and collected I applied myself, by way of occupation, to the finishing of my work. I brought it to a close as well as I could, and published it; but the time and circumstances in which it was produced rendered me always unable to look upon it with satisfaction. Still it took with the public, and gave me celebrity, as an original work was something remarkable and uncommon in America. I was noticed, caressed, and for a time elevated by the popularity I had gained. I found myself uncomfortable in my feelings in New York, and travelled about a little. Wherever I went I was overwhelmed with attentions; I was full of youth and animation, far different from the being I now am, and I was quite flushed with this early taste of public favour. Still, however, the career of gaiety and notoriety soon palled upon me. I seemed to drift about without aim or object, at the mercy of every breeze; my heart wanted anchorage. I was naturally susceptible, and tried to form other attachments; but my heart would not hold on, it would continually recur to what it had lost; and whenever there was a pause in the hurry of novelty and excitement, I would sink into dismal dejection. For years I could not talk on the subject of this hopeless

regret—I could not even mention her name; but her image was continually before me, and I dreamt of her incessantly.'

Tracing out the details of this love-story from the *Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, by his nephew, Pierre E. Irving, and piecing them together in their order, we may note its progress with tolerable clearness.

Young Irving was articled clerk to Mr. Josiah Ogden Hoffman. He was a good-natured, kindly-disposed, modest youth, witty, merry, and somewhat given to mischief of a humorous character. His father was a severely pious, strictly orthodox emigrant from Scotland, a descendant of the loyal courageous knight De Irwyn, who was the steadfast friend, armour-bearer, and secretary to Robert Bruce.

The boy was Christian-named after the great fighter for American Independence; and although his father held all lawyers in dislike (as sons of the Evil One), he had yielded to the wishes of Washington, and articled him to a member of the legal profession. And, by the bye, we may here mention that a story is told of how, when the young student of the law was a very little boy, stout Washington, the newly made President of the newly United States, going into a shop one morning was followed by a Scotch serving-girl with a small boy, who said, 'Please, your honour, here's a bairn who was named after you;' whereupon it is said the great man placed his hand on the child's head and smilingly blessed him.

The family of Mr. Hoffman consisted of a former wife's three children—a son destined to attain a high position at the Bar and in Congress, where his eloquence won him the cognomen of 'Silver-tongued,' and two daughters,

aged respectively fourteen and twelve. This young wife was a most amiable and interesting woman from Philadelphia, where her father, Mr. Fennoc, edited a Federal paper.* She too had formed a genuine friendship for the sickly young law student, who pursued his legal studies in the half-hearted, listless way in which a year or two before he had followed his school studies, making in the one, as in the other, very little progress.

Young Washington had an elder brother named Peter, who was the proprietor and editor of a daily newspaper newly started called the *Morning Chronicle*, 'in which it was Washington's greatest pride and delight to appear in print as "Jonathan Oldstyle."'

Describing his condition at this time, he says in a letter to a friend, 'I am too weak to take any exercise, and too low-spirited half the time to enjoy company. My chief amusements are reading, drawing, and writing letters. The two latter I have to do more sparingly than I could wish, on account of the pain in my chest.' And how alarmingly serious his state was may be judged when we add that one who once slept in a room adjoining his asked in the morning, 'Was that young Irving who slept in the next room to mine, and kept up such an incessant cough all night?' 'It was,' was the reply. 'He is not long for this world,' rejoined the foreboding querist.

It will be seen from what follows, however, that under the care of Mrs. and the Misses Hoffman his health must have rapidly improved.

In the summer of the year after his coming to Mr. Hoffman's

house, Washington, endeared to and loving the kindly ladies who had nursed and waited upon him with so much tenderness, was invited by Mr. Hoffman to join them on an expedition to Ogdensburg, Montreal, and Quebec—a formidable undertaking in those days, when roads were bad and few, and the modes of conveyance clumsy and scarce, when a tour involved trials and dangers and discomforts of which we can have but a very imperfect idea. They rode in a wagon, and had another wagon drawn by oxen for the luggage. They frequently had to walk when the track was too rough for riding, and they slept either in a wagon or in log-cabins by the way. Irving describes how they all slept in one room divided by a blanket, on one side of which were mattresses for the ladies, and great-coats, &c., for themselves, while on the other side slept the wagoners and their servants. Sometimes for days together their only food would be biscuits and gingerbread, and more than once an entire day was passed without food of any kind. Many times the steaming, struggling, panting horses would lie down and refuse to move, or the wagons would stick in the mud, and for hours defy all their efforts to extricate them. During a part of the journey the rain descended in torrents, and they had to walk through it. 'In several parts of the road,' Irving wrote in his journal, 'I was up to my middle in mud and water;' and he tells how once he found shelter for the ladies in a little shed of bark, erected by some benighted hunter in the depths of the wood, which was large enough to shelter three, 'and under which the ladies sat trembling with fear while a furious storm was raging.' Irving also describes

* The Federal party was that of General Washington, who still upheld most of the principles of the British Government.

himself in a log-cabin holding an umbrella over the sleeping ladies, because the rain beat in through the roof of a little room about sixteen feet square, in which fifteen persons passed the night. In this position he remained listening to the howling wind and the crash of falling trees, varied now and then by the cries of the forest wolves; and writing in his journal, he well might say, 'I never passed so dreary a night in my life.' On another occasion of this memorable *pleasure* jaunt he describes four of the party as riding on the wagon-horses, the gentlemen with the ladies behind them, 'while he stayed in the wagon with the girls.'

It was during this journey that Irving gained his earliest knowledge of savage life, and one drunken squaw showed him so much favour that her lord and master's jealousy was aroused, and Irving was in no little danger of losing his life. Irving was, however, baptised under a new name as a member of the tribe at the suggestion and to the great amusement of the ladies, 'who stood at the door enjoying the scene with undisguised unction.' He was then, with strange and solemn ceremonies, named *Vomoute*, a word signifying 'good to everybody.' On the same occasion the head of this merry tourist-party was named *Citrovani*, or 'shining man.' So they came at last to the village of Ogdensburg.

Fifty years after, Washington Irving paid that spot a second visit, when Ogdensburg had become a populous city, occupying both banks of the river. This was while making a later tour, of which he said that visit was the most interesting feature. Comparing it with his former visit to the same place, he wrote, 'All the country then

was a wilderness; we floated down the Black River in a scow; we toiled through forests in wagons drawn by oxen; we slept in hunters' cabins, and were once four-and-twenty hours without food. . . . What happy days I passed there! rambling about the woods with the young ladies, or paddling with them in Indian canoes on the limpid waters of the St. Lawrence, or fishing about the rapids, and visiting the Indians, who still lived on islands in the river. Everything was so grand and so silent and so solitary. I don't think any scene in my life made a more delightful impression on me. . . . I walked to the point where, with the two girls, I used to launch forward in the canoe, while the rest of the party would wave handkerchiefs, and cheer us from the shore. It is now a bustling landing-place for steamers. There were still some rocks where I used to sit of an evening and accompany, with my flute, one of the ladies, who sang. . . . I sat for a long time on the rocks, summoning recollections of bygone days, and of the happy beings by whom I was then surrounded. All had passed away! all were dead and gone! Of that young and joyous party I was the only survivor; they had all lived quietly at home, out of the reach of mischance, yet had gone down to their graves, while I, who had been wandering about the world, exposed to all hazards by sea or land, was yet alive. It seemed almost marvellous. I have often, in my shifting about the world, come upon traces of former existence; but I do not think anything made a stronger impression upon me than this second visit to the banks of the Oswegatchie.'

In the year after the first tour, Irving was sent by his brother on a

visit to England, with a hope that his health, then still very delicate, would be thereby restored. Parting from his family and the Hoffmans, he wrote: 'I felt heavy-hearted at leaving, as you may suppose. When the steeples of the city faded from my view, it seemed as if I had left the world behind me, and was cast among strangers without a friend, sick and solitary. I passed a melancholy lonesome day; turned into my berth at night sick at heart, and lay for hours thinking of the friends I had left behind me.'

He received a letter from his brother, enclosing some enthusiastically complimentary lines on himself, written by Mrs. Hoffman's sister at Naples, and wrote back: 'The good opinion of such a woman would be highly flattering to a fellow of less vanity than myself; but I assure you it was not merely my vanity that was aroused. The least token of remembrance from them is enlivening, and like a gleam of sunshine on my lonely feelings. . . The tears rushed to my eyes like an infant's, and I could only bless her with all the fervour of my heart.'

In another letter he wrote: 'When you see Mr. Hoffman, present him my warmest remembrances, and tell him I long for the time when I shall be once more numbered among his disciples.'

In 1806 Irving reappeared in New York, with health renewed and invigorated, and soon after described himself sitting in the parlour of the Hoffmans, 'Mrs. Hoffman sewing like a good housewife, little Charles sleeping upstairs, and *little old fashion* by my side, studiously turning over the pages of a family Bible, the girls all out in the sunshine,' and him-

self 'beating the old lady deplorably at cribbage.'

Speaking of letters from Mr. and Mrs. Hoffman, he says, 'They are so kind and affectionate, that I cannot express to you how grateful they were to my feelings.'

At this time his sister died, and soon after he encountered 'a blow,' says his nephew, Pierre Irving, 'which left him for a while little heart for his work, and probably gave a colour to his whole future existence.' At first, unconsciously perhaps, his whole heart had been given to the second daughter of Mr. Hoffman—Matilda; and when he discovered the state of his affections, the passion had deepened into one of glowing intensity. He refrained from urging his suit in good set form, postponing a formal proposal for the lady's hand until he had some 'sober certainty' of a settled and sufficient income. Yet all his fondest hopes centred in that of making her his wife, and all his dreams of future happiness were associated with that delightful prospect. 'I think,' he wrote, in one of his letters, 'these early and improvident marriages are apt to break down the spirit and energy of a young man, and make him a hard-working, half-starving, repining animal all his days.' And on another occasion he said: 'Young men in our country think it great extravagance to set up a horse and carriage without adequate means, but they make no account of setting up a wife and family, which is far more expensive.'

On the 26th of April, the month in which Irving was born, and in the year 1809, fell that awful blow above referred to—on that day the gentle, engaging, and lovely Matilda Hoffman died.

As evidence of the romantic tenderness with which Irving

cherished this gentle creature's memory, it is told how he carried away her Bible and Prayer-book ; and in the days when his anguish was most deeply felt, he slept with them under his pillow. We are told, too, that throughout all his wanderings in many lands, these relics of his early love were his inseparable companions.

But he bore the blow manfully. Very few knew, however closely they might guess, how terribly crushing its effects had been. From that time forth he shrank from speaking of her, and even to those who knew her best, and who were dearest to himself, he never mentioned her name.

He retired into the country and gave himself up to hard work, leading, as he said, a 'half-monastic life, and by constantly exercising my mind, preventing it from preying upon itself,' adding, 'We are apt to retain an impression in respect to a place from the state of our feelings on last quitting it, and when I left New York I emerged from such a scene of gloom and heart-aching distress, that on returning to it I should feel like a prisoner returning to his dungeon.' In another letter he wrote to Mrs. Hoffman, 'I must soon leave this place and return once more to the city ; but it will be necessity, not inclination, that will lead me, I feel so contented here, so quiet. Life seems to flow so smoothly in the country, without even a ripple to disturb the current, that I could almost float

with the stream and glide insensibly through life.'

When he did return it was with a grief-worn face and a constant expression of quiet tender melancholy, which a portrait of him taken some time after distinctly depicts. His relatives, recognising his deep sorrow, respected it by never mentioning the name of Matilda in their conversation, and his nephew wrote : 'I have heard of but one instance in which it was obtruded upon him, and that was by her father, Mr. Hoffman, nearly thirty years after her death, and at his own house. A granddaughter had been requested to play for him some favourite piece on the piano, and in extracting her music from the drawer had accidentally brought forth a piece of embroidery with it.

"Washington," said Mr. Hoffman, picking up the faded relic, "this is a piece of poor Matilda's workmanship."

'The effect,' says Pierre Irving, 'was electric. He had been conversing in the sprightliest mood before, and he sank into utter silence, and in a few moments got up and left the house.'

In a letter to Washington written soon after Miss Hoffman's death, Irving wrote, 'May her gentle spirit have found that heaven to which it ever seemed to appertain ! She was too spotless for this contaminated world.'

And now this sad old real story of true love, so far as I can glean it, is complete.

A. H. W.

'T WAS NOT SO LONG AGO.

(See the Illustration.)

How fondly I remember yet
Your sweet and sunny face !
I can't forget the hour we met,
And can't forget the place.
A little time away it seems—
About a day or so ;
Our life is made of little dreams—
'Twas not so long ago.

Ah me ! what silly things we say,
What silly things are done,
When Youth and Pleasure lead the way,
And folks are twenty-one !
Like angry waves the cruel years
Have tossed me to and fro ;
And yet how close the past appears !—
'Twas not so long ago.

I recollect the tender talk
We held along the lane ;
Our dialogue throughout the walk
Was fervid, though inane.
You hovered long, it seems to me,
Between a ' Yes ' and ' No ;'
I've ne'er forgotten *that*, you see—
'Twas not so long ago.

We both adorn the wedded state,
And now are fixed for life ;
Another husband is your mate,
And mine another wife.
Yet years above my head may roll,
And wrap my head in snow,
Ere I forget our summer stroll—
'Twas not so long ago.

HENRY S. LEIGH.

LONDON SOCIETY.

MARCH 1882.

THE QUEEN AND OUR ROYAL FAMILY IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

EVERY one recognises that her Majesty, as she is the most illustrious, so also she is one of the most popular, of modern authors. Her *Journal in the Highlands* found a most ready admission to the hearts and minds of her people. This feeling was intensified by the publication of the *Early Years of the Prince Consort*, which was afterwards expanded into the four-volume *Life of the Prince*, to which the Queen contributed so much important material and illustrated with such touching personal notes. Within the last few months two works have been published illustrating the extraordinary artistic gifts of two members of the royal house. One of these is the book of the musical compositions of Prince Albert, fully sustaining the great reputation which he possessed in his life. The second is the lovely book of floral designs and mottoes by her Royal Highness the Princess Beatrice. In mentioning the conspicuous gifts and attainments of members of the Royal Family, we ought not to pass over those remarkable efforts, those musical speeches on music, lately delivered at Manchester by Prince Leopold and the Duke of Edinburgh. Any continuation of Walpole's *Royal and Noble Authors*

must be largely occupied by her present Britannic Majesty. Queen Victoria mainly sustains the burden of royal authorship in contemporary history. There are writings of the Queen which are still more important, though infinitely less known, than the volumes associated with her name. Her Majesty has always taken the deepest interest in the highest politics of the age. Foreign politics are, indeed, always of the most absorbing interest for the family of crowned heads. The Queen is the most constitutional of sovereigns. She has avoided and abjured the error of her grandfather, George III., who, at one time, wished to reduce his Cabinet Ministers to a staff of clerks. It was one of the surpassing merits and services of Prince Albert that he thoroughly mastered the theory of the English Constitution, and applied it practically to all the details of the arrangements between the Crown and the people. There is reason to believe that her Majesty has personally inspired many a despatch, and has written various letters which form great state documents in international history. We may mention the letters of remonstrance which she wrote to Louis Philippe on the subject of the Spanish marriage,

and to the Emperor Nicholas before the breaking out of the Crimean War. Probably her Majesty is the great living depository of vast political knowledge. What books she could write, if she only chose! In the House of Commons Mr. Disraeli bore witness, and so also have other statesmen, to her Majesty's unique knowledge, and, we may add, her Majesty's useful and beneficent employment of such knowledge. It is not too much to say that her Majesty has known a greater number of distinguished and illustrious persons, has known them for a longer time and more extensively, than any private person who lives, or has lived in these realms during her time. Her Majesty, beyond state occasion, has always had a kindly feeling and enlightened curiosity in respect to remarkable people, which, in almost innumerable instances, has led to her commanding a personal attendance on herself. One of the most remarkable literary anecdotes of the last century was the conversation that passed between George III. and Dr. Samuel Johnson. We understand that conversations of this kind are of almost constant recurrence between her Majesty and many of her subjects who have been distinguished for genius and worth.

Thus much, in an article of the present kind, it was almost necessary to say at the outset. The purpose of our paper is not now to pass in review what the Queen has done in authorship, but what modern authors have to say about the Queen and the Royal Family.

Quite recently several works have been published with passages that give a most interesting insight into the royal character and the royal home. In some cases we may venture to suppose that the

royal permission, or, indeed, the royal approbation, has been obtained previous to publication. Books containing references to the Queen, from the first year of her reign to the present year of grace, exist in some number. We may say at the outset that books published by foreign ambassadors occupy the first place in such literature. Such gentlemen possess great facilities, and their writings possess the stamp of authenticity. There are two ambassadors, now both deceased, who have written largely on the subject of their intercourse with the Court of St. James's. These are Baron Bunsen and M. Guizot. We drew attention largely in this magazine to these interesting memoirs and *memorabilia* at the time of their publication. They may now be almost entirely passed over; only we shall have to call attention, among other books, to the *Life of Madame Bunsen*, published some time after her husband's death. We have examined a number of volumes containing anecdotes and conversations of her Majesty, and purpose bringing them together as materials for a study of character, and endeavouring to indicate the connection with comments and notes.

Even at a very early age, long before she came to the Crown, her character was recognised as one of rare intelligence and goodness. There were those who hardly did justice to her fine qualities at first, but the impression which she made was a deep and growing one. In a volume of great interest that has very recently been published—the *Journals and Letters of Caroline Fox*—we have a speech recorded of the Duchess of Kent to her child: 'I am anxious to bring you up as a good woman, and then you will be a good Queen also.' 'The care observed

in the Princess's education,' writes Miss Fox, 'is exemplary, and everything is indeed done to bring about this result. She is a good linguist, an acute foreign politician, and possesses very sound common sense.' The accomplishments of her Majesty as a linguist and politician are indeed remarkable. She has always possessed a real control over the Foreign Office. Sir Robert Peel was very careful to explain to her that while a constitutional monarch she had a real, independent, substantial power of her own. This is best seen in the well-known and remarkable letter which she addressed to Lord John Russell in regard to the conduct of Lord Palmerston: 'The Queen expects to be informed of what passes between him (Lord Palmerston) and the foreign Ministers before important decisions are taken based upon that intercourse; to receive the foreign despatches in good time; and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her in sufficient time to make herself acquainted with their contents before they are sent off. The Queen thinks it best that Lord John Russell should show this letter to Lord Palmerston.* Lord Campbell, when Solicitor-General, met the Princess Victoria at dinner at Kensington Palace when she was quite a young girl. 'She seems in good health and looks lively and good-humoured. She is very graceful in her manners. She appeared in the drawing-room before dinner, and we found her there when we returned. Those about her were loud in her praises. Her life is very valuable, for if the Duke of Cumberland were next heir a revolution would be inevitable.†

The Duke of Cumberland was

* The *Stockmar Memoirs*, ii. 461.

† *Life of Lord Campbell*, ii. 85.

not a gracious man, and, we are afraid, not a good man—there was a great deal of unpleasant mystery about him; but we think that even in those violent days of reform the apprehension of a revolution was an exaggerated one. Very soon after the accession, Campbell, now Mr. Attorney, had an invitation to dine with her Majesty 'at seven.' 'The little Queen was exceedingly civil to me, and said that she had heard from the Duchess of Gloucester that I had the most beautiful children in the world. She asked me how many we had, and when she heard *seven* seemed rather appalled, considering this a number which she would never be able to reach. She seems in perfect health, and is as merry and playful as a kitten.' Again he writes, 'I was several hours at the Queen's ball last night—a scene never to be forgotten. The Queen was in great spirits, and danced with more than usual gaiety. She received Peel with great civility.' The sagacious Campbell comes to the conclusion, 'All flattery apart, the Queen is certainly a most extraordinary young woman.' Here is an interesting reference to her Majesty and Lord Melbourne: 'I witnessed a burst of feeling from him for which I was not prepared. He was talking of the Queen having said to him, among the first things she uttered after her accession, that her father's debts must be paid. In repeating this declaration he shed tears, and was much affected. . . . The most distinguished event of my life has been that this morning I was strongly urged by the Lord Chancellor to dance a Scotch reel before the Queen.' Further on we have other references to the Queen in Lord Campbell's *Autobiography and Letters*.

One of the great charms of her Majesty has always been her voice.

To the initiated the voice is always the clearest and most un-failing index of character. In contemporary literature we have repeated notes of admiration for this pure and peerless voice. 'Lady de Dustanville was in the House of Peers when the Queen first appeared. It was a most imposing sight. Her voice was full, clear, and sweet, and most distinctly heard.' Passages of this kind might be multiplied. Miss Fox gives some very pleasing incidents of the early days. 'Uncle Charles dined with us. He was delighted and dazzled by the display on the Queen's day, and mentioned a right merry quibble, perpetrated by my Lord Albemarle, who, on her Majesty saying, "I wonder if my good people of London are as glad to see me as I am to see them?" pointed out as their immediate Cockney answer to the quibble V.R.' She relates the touching incident that when the Queen drove one day to the Park, just after a dastardly attempt, in fear of assassination she 'forbade her ladies to attend her and expose themselves to danger from which she would not shrink.' 'Landseer showed us a picture he has just finished of the Queen and Prince Albert in their fancy ball-dresses. He deeply admires the Queen's intellect, which he thinks superior to any woman's in Europe. Her memory is so very remarkable that he has heard her recall the exact words of speeches made years before which the speakers had themselves forgotten.'

We resolutely abstain from quoting any matter from the *Life of the Prince Consort*, because we may suppose that, in its present cheap form, it has well-nigh found its way into the hands of every one. The *Memoirs of Baron Stockmar* may be advantageously compared with it. Stockmar came

over nearly every year to visit the Queen and the Prince, and almost entirely took the management of the whole *ménage* into his hands. He put all the details of the management of the royal household on a sort of philosophical basis. He passed at will from the broadest generalisations on the British Constitution to the smallest details of the nursery. 'The organisation and superintendence of the children's department occupied a considerable portion of Stockmar's time. In one of his letters he writes, "The nursery gives me more trouble than the government of a kingdom would do."

We may mention that the little Princess (the Crown Princess of Prussia), now a woman blooming with health and life, was for many years a sickly child, whose rearing long seemed a matter of doubt.* He found that an odious system of red-tapeism pervaded the management of the royal household. It was in the hands of three great state officers—the Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Master of the Horse. These are always noblemen of high rank and great political position, who of course delegate all the practical duties into the hands of subordinates. The result was that all the tricks of the Circumlocution Office were to be found in Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. There was a great deal of the how-not-to-do-it element. The outside of the Palace belonged to the department of the Woods and Forests; the inside cleaning of the windows belonged to the Lord Chamberlain's department. The Lord Steward lays the fire, and the Lord Chamberlain lights it. The Lord Chamberlain provides the lamps, and the Lord Steward must clean, trim, and light them. If a window-pane

* *Stockmar Memoirs*, ii. 48.

was broken, or a cupboard-door went wrong, there were a whole series of formalities to be gone through before either could be mended. Stockmar complains that there was no one to receive visitors, and show them their rooms; and that they wandered about the corridors alone and unassisted. M. Guizot relates that this was a circumstance which once actually happened to himself. It was through this state of things that the boy Jones was enabled at one o'clock in the morning actually to hide himself under the sofa of the room next the Queen's bedroom, just after the birth of the Princess Royal. Once when the Queen was taken ill there was nobody whose business it was to attend to such a matter; until at last a domestic had the presence of mind to hail a cab to come to the door of Buckingham Palace, and to drive off to fetch a doctor. We have reason to believe that all the anomalies which Stockmar pointed out in his memorandum have been rectified. The royal household is now a model to every household in the kingdom. Its guests are made as comfortable as in the most home-like home in the land. Indeed, in the pleasantness and freedom of the arrangement, Windsor Castle seems almost Liberty Hall to its visitors. The Baroness Bunsen writes: 'I have always liked the visits at Windsor; the comfortable quiet and independence, in which one could spend as much time as one would of the day in one's own comfortable rooms, where I have written letters and read books for which I had no time in London. The period of state stiffness was often restricted within the narrowest imaginable bounds.' She amusingly observes: 'One must make an N.B. that when one visits queens, they give one

everything but *matches*. I was once in the extreme of distress for one at Queen Adelaide's.' Before parting with Baron Stockmar, however, we must quote his striking language respecting the Queen: 'The character of the Queen develops itself to great advantage. She gains daily in judgment and experience. The candour, truthfulness, honesty, and fairness with which she judges of men and things are really delightful; the impartial self-knowledge with which she speaks of herself is thoroughly charming.'

The Baroness Bunsen was a woman of acute observation and sound judgment. Singularly high is her own estimate of the Queen. Indeed, she rises into positive enthusiasm. We find that in her old age, on the last Palm Sunday of her life, 'the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess of Baden came up to her with their usual gracious cordiality, giving her the kindest possible message from Queen Victoria—a last proof of remembrance from a sovereign whose course she had never failed to follow with the most profound admiration and affection.' The following is an entry in her diary: 'Think of the dear Queen's having sent me a copy of Prince Albert's speeches, with the introduction that struck me so much, as containing passages that I think she will have written herself.' Going back to the personal intercourse which the Baroness had with her Majesty, we find such interesting passages as the following: 'The Queen was most kind and amiable, and it is always a pleasure to see her and know about the spirit and activity and sense of duty that pervade her day.' 'I was at a loss to conceive how any woman's sides can bear the beating of so strong a throb as must attend the consciousness

of being the object of all that excitement, and the centre of attraction for all those eyes; but the Queen has royal strength of nerve.'

We think that we cannot do better than bring together some further extracts from the diary of the Baroness Bunsen:

(a) 'Windsor Castle, 28th January 1842.—I was at work till three; then came by railway to Windsor, and found that in the York Tower a comfortable set of rooms were awaiting us. The upper housemaid gave us tea and bread-and-butter—very refreshing. When dressed we went together to the corridor: soon met Lord Delawarr, the Duchess of Buccleuch, and Lord and Lady Westmoreland; the former showed us where to go—that is, to walk through the corridor (a fairy scene—lights, pictures, moving figures of courtiers unknown) to apartments which we passed through one after another, till we reached the magnificent ball-room, where the guests were assembled to await the Queen's appearance. Among these guests stood our King himself, punctual to half-past seven; soon came Prince Albert, to whom Lord Delawarr named me, when he spoke to me of Rome. We had not been there long before two gentlemen, walking in by the same door by which we had entered, and then turning and making profound bows towards the open door, showed that the Queen was coming. She approached me directly, and said, with a gracious smile, "I am very much pleased to see you," then passed on; and after speaking a few moments to the King, took his arm and moved on, "God save the Queen" having begun to sound in the same moment from the Waterloo Gallery, where the

Queen has always dined since the King has been with her. Lord Haddington led me in to dinner, and one of the King's suite sat on the other side. The scene was one of fairy tales, of indescribable magnificence—the proportions of the hall, the mass of light in suspension, the gold plate on the table, glittering with a thousand lights in branches of a proper height not to meet the eye. The King's health was drunk, then the Queen's, and then her Majesty rose and went out, followed by all the ladies. During the half-hour or less that elapsed before Prince Albert, the King, &c., followed the Queen, she did not sit, but went round to speak to different ladies. She asked after my children.'

(b) 'Windsor Castle, 15th September 1846.—I arrived here at six, and at eight went to dinner in the great hall hung round with the Waterloo pictures. The band played exquisitely, so placed as to be invisible; so that what with the large proportions of the hall, and the well-subdued lights, and the splendours of plate and decoration, the scene was such as fairy tales present; and Lady Canning, Miss Stanley, and Miss Dawson were beautiful enough to represent an ideal Queen's ideal attendants. The Queen looked well and *rayonnante*, with that expression of countenance which she has when pleased with what surrounds her, and which you know I like to see.'

(c) 'We have the same agreeable apartments as last winter, on a level with the corridor, and therefore not putting my deficient order of location, or whatever you call the faculty of finding one's way, to the test. The party at dinner were Lord and Lady Derby, Lord and Lady Granville, and Sir Charles and Lady Mary Wood.

Lady Canning, who is in waiting, was most amiable and conversable; she is a thoroughly harmonious person, and her tone of voice seems sweeter than ever. Charming was the music during dinner, the first being the "Midsummer Night's Dream," exquisitely played. In the evening Sainton played finely on the violin with accompaniment. The Queen spoke so long to each person after dinner that the standing period was unusually protracted, and the sitting-down circle was very short, although we did not move to bed till half-past eleven. When the Queen sat down I was bidden to sit at the other end of the sofa.

Such is the Queen's kindly manner; but we believe the proper etiquette is for the invited guest to continue standing.

(d) 'I wish my account of the dogs may amuse Lilla and Lisa; but I should have liked best to have had them with me, to see what I saw that evening between five and six o'clock, when we followed the Queen and Prince Albert a long way, through one large room after another, till we came to one where a red curtain was let down; and we all sate in the dark till the curtain was drawn aside, and the Princess Alice, who had been dressed to represent Spring, recited some verses taken from Thomson's "Seasons," enumerating the flowers which Spring scatters around. And she did it very well; spoke in a distinct and pleasing manner, with excellent modulation, and a tone of voice like that of the Queen. Then the curtain was drawn, and the whole scene changed; and the Princess Royal represented Summer, with Prince Arthur lying upon some sheaves, as if tired with the heat and harvest work. The Princess Royal also recited verses. Then again

there was a change; and Prince Alfred, with a crown of vine-leaves and a panther's skin, represented Autumn, and recited also verses, and looked very well. Then there was a change to a winter landscape; and the Prince of Wales represented Winter, with a white beard, and a cloak with icicles or snowflakes (or what looked like such); and the Princess Louise, warmly clothed, who seemed watching the fire; and the Prince also recited well a passage altered from Thomson, which grandmamma used to know by heart. Then another change was made, and all the seasons were grouped together; and far behind, on high, appeared the Princess Helena, with a long veil hanging on each side down to her feet, and a long cross in her hand, pronouncing a blessing on the Queen and Prince in the name of all the seasons. . . . The Queen ordered the curtain to be again drawn back, and we saw the whole Royal Family; and they were helped to jump down from their raised platform, and then all came into the light, and we saw them well. And the baby Prince Leopold was brought in by his nurse, and looked at us all with big eyes, and wanted to go to his papa, Prince Albert. At the dinner-table the Princesses Helena and Louise, and Prince Arthur, were allowed to come in and to stand by their mamma the Queen, as it was a festival day.'

One of the best parts of the memoirs is the account of the Queen's reception in Cambridge on the occasion of the installation of the Prince Consort as Chancellor of the University. We would, however, refer our readers to another account of this visit, to be found in the correspondence of the late Dr. Whewell, the Mas-

ter of Trinity College. He speaks of the natural consternation created by a royal visit to the Lodge, of the happy success that marked the visit, of the little incidents of the stay, of the gracious kindness of her Majesty. The two accounts by Dr. Whewell and the Baroness Bunsen are very well worthy of comparison.

We may here give a few interesting lines from Mr. Torrens' *Life of Lord Melbourne* :

'The Queen seemed much struck with the beauty of the park, and of the windings of the Lee through its noble glades. Under the great oaks and beeches near the house groups of young and old were gathered, awaiting the youthful sovereign, who they knew had their best friend for her chief Minister, but whom few of them had ever seen before. In front of the mansion he awaited the approach of the Queen, and upon her arrival conducted her Majesty through the principal rooms; and after tendering a graceful welcome, had the honour of entertaining the royal party at luncheon. An hour was subsequently passed in noticing the pictures—several of which were interesting to her Majesty, as recalling the memory of those with whom Melbourne had spent his early days. He had then the gratification of conducting her through a portion of the grounds, where the delight of the people broke forth in a gladness so loyal and affectionate, that more than once he was visibly affected. He knew the end of his official career was nigh at hand; but it had been long, and this was a delicious sunset.' Passages like this respecting her Majesty's visits to her great subjects might easily be multiplied.

We fall back upon Lord Campbell for some further illustrations.

This shrewd Scotchman never appears to greater advantage than in the social notes which he made on all that went on about him. 'She does the honours of her palace with infinite sweetness and grace. . . . A dance followed. The Queen chiefly delighted in a romping kind of country dance, called the Tempête.' 'It was at the Queen's ball on Friday night that Bunsen first told me of the Russians crossing the Pruth. This was confirmed by Lord Aberdeen, who, to my great astonishment, said it might lead to negotiations and peace, whereas I consider it flagrant war.' He writes in 1860, the year in which he lost his wife: 'I dined to-day at the Palace, and sitting on the Queen's right hand, had a great deal of conversation with her about Lord John and Palmerston, and the answer to Thouvenal; but I am now indifferent about all such matters.' We will now proceed with a brief set of extracts.

(a) 'I received *two* seals—one for the Duchy of Lancaster, and one for the County Palatine of Lancaster. My ignorance of the double honour which awaited me caused an awkward accident; for when the Queen put two velvet bags into my hand, I grasped one only, and the other, with its heavy weight, fell down on the floor, and might have bruised the royal toes; but Prince Albert good-naturedly picked it up and restored it to me.'

(b) 'By the bye, there was rather an amusing scene in the Queen's closet. I had an audience that her Majesty might prick a sheriff for the county of Lancaster, which she did in proper style with the bodkin I put into her hand. I then took her pleasure about some Duchy hirings and withdrew, forgetting to make her sign the parchment roll. I ob-

tained a second audience and explained the mistake. While she was signing, Prince Albert said to me, "Pray, my lord, when did the ceremony of pricking begin?" *Campbell*: "In ancient times, sir, when sovereigns did not know how to write their names." *Queen* (as she returned me the roll with her signature): "But we now show that we have been to school."

(c) 'Mary and Loo and I dined at the Palace on Saturday. On our arrival, a little before eight, we were shown into the picture-gallery, where the company assembled. Bowes, who acted as Master of the Ceremonies, arranged what gentleman should take what lady. He said, "Dinner is ordered to be on the table at ten minutes past eight; but I bet you the Queen will not be here till twenty or twenty-five minutes after. She always thinks she can dress in ten minutes, but she takes about double the time." True enough, it was nearly twenty-five minutes after eight before she appeared. She shook hands with the ladies, bowed to the gentlemen, and proceeded to the *salle-d-manger*. The greatest delicacy we had was some very nice oat-cake. There was a Highland piper standing behind her Majesty's chair, but he did not play, as at "state dinners." We had likewise some Edinburgh ale.'

(d) 'Lord Palmerston said that the Queen was greatly delighted with the Highlands, in spite of the bad weather, and that she was accustomed to sally forth for a walk in the midst of a heavy rain, putting a great hood over her bonnet, and showing nothing of her features but her eyes. The Prince's invariable return to luncheon at two o'clock, in spite of grouse-shooting and deer-stalking, is explained by his voluntary design to please the Queen, and

by the intense hunger which always assails him at this hour, when he likes, in the German fashion, to make his dinner.'

(e) 'John, Lord Campbell, having sworn to serve her Majesty truly as Lord Chancellor in the terms of the ancient oath, she motioned to him to take up a huge red-velvet bag which lay upon the table before her, and contained the Great Seal in its embroidered purse and all its coverings, as described in the *Lives of the Chancellors*. According to the custom of Queen Elizabeth on such occasions, she ought to have made me a long speech; but she only held out her hand for me to kiss, and I had no opportunity of dwelling upon the felicities of her Majesty's auspicious reign, or my own devoted attachment to her service. Having got our seals, keys, wands, &c., we all came back to London very merrily. . . . In the evening I went to a concert at the Palace. Her Majesty was very gracious to me, and expressed a hope that I might not find the duties of my new office too laborious. I could only say, "Madam, I shall do my best worthily to serve your Majesty."

(f) 'My wife and I were invited to dine with her Majesty at Windsor on Saturday, the 26th of November, and to stay till Monday. The visit passed off most agreeably. On our arrival on Saturday evening we were inducted into a nice *appartement* of three *pièces*, looking on the Long Walk. I had the honour to take the Princess Alice to dinner, and to sit on the Queen's left hand; her son-in-law, Prince William Frederick of Prussia, being on her right. . . . On Sunday I attended her Majesty to chapel. At dinner I sat next the Princess William Frederick (Princess Royal); and,

getting deep into her confidence, she told me how Prince William Frederick proposed to her as they were riding together over a heathy mountain at Balmoral, and how happily they had lived together, notwithstanding the stories published in the newspapers of her being neglected and ill-used. . . . I do believe that it was a marriage of affection, and that it has turned out very auspiciously. The Queen was extremely civil to Lady Stratheden, and introduced her to Beatrice, the baby princess.'

(g) 'I have received her Majesty's most gracious present of my half of the old Great Seal, set in a most beautiful silver salver, with the royal arms at the top and the Campbell arms at the bottom. Her Majesty is on horseback, and looks very grave and patriotic. Her royal style and title may be read inscribed,—*"Victoria Britanniarum Regina."* It was accompanied by a brief letter to me from Sir Charles Phipps, her private secretary, expressing her Majesty's wishes that it might long be an ornament to my sideboard. It really is a very handsome piece of plate, and I hope it may ornament the sideboard of the ninth Lord Stratheden in the reign of Albert IX. I intend on great occasions, when grace after meat has been said, to produce it full of rose-water, "in City fashion," every guest to dip his or her napkin in the rose-water, and to praise the great Queen Victoria and Lord Chancellor Campbell !'

Lord Macaulay was several times at Windsor Castle. He addressed a letter to his constituents at Edinburgh, which he somewhat imprudently dated from Windsor Castle. For this he was immensely chaffed. The *Times* talked of Mr. Macaulay's 'little place' in Berkshire, and

said something impudent of his being there to supply the place of her Majesty's deceased monkey. Even Sir Robert Peel, in the House of Commons, twitted him with having proclaimed his political principles 'from the lofty keep of Windsor Castle.' About the same time Mr. Macaulay had imprudently described himself as the 'first Minister of the Crown,' and there really seems some ground for crediting him with considerable pretentiousness. With all his exaggerated Whiggism he was intensely loyal; and at the conclusion of the second volume of the *History of England*, latently referring to her Majesty, he eloquently speaks of a 'loyal nation gathered around a parental throne.' Thackeray admirably asks, 'Where more properly could a great man like Macaulay be entertained than at Windsor Castle?' In Mr. Trevelyan's absorbingly interesting biography of his illustrious uncle, he gives the following extract from his diary :

'March 9, 1850.—To dinner at the Palace. The Queen was most gracious to me. She talked much about my book, and owned that she had nothing to say for her poor ancestor, James II. "Not your Majesty's ancestor," said I: "your Majesty's predecessor." I hope this was not an uncourtly correction. I meant it as a compliment, and she seemed to take it so.'

In the year 1839 Macaulay dined at the Palace for the first time, and described his entertainment in a letter to one of his sisters. 'We all spoke in whispers; and, when dinner was over, almost everybody went to cards or chess. I was presented, knelt down, kissed her Majesty's hand, had the honour of a conversation with her of about two minutes, and assured her that India was hot, and that I kept my health

there.' Mr. Trevelyan goes on to say: 'It may well be believed that Macaulay did not relish a society where he fancied himself bound to condense his remarks into the space of two minutes, and to speak in the nearest approach to a whisper which he had at his command. But, in truth, the restraint under which he found himself was mainly due to his own inexperience of Court life; and, as time went on, he began to perceive that he could not make himself more acceptable than by talking as he talked elsewhere. Before long, a lady who met him frequently at the Palace, both in the character of a Cabinet Minister and of a private guest, writes: "Mr. Macaulay was very interesting to listen to; quite immeasurably abundant in anecdote and knowledge."'

No fewer than three illustrious prelates have given an account of their peeps at Royalty. We bring together these scattered references. The first is a citation from the *Letters of Bishop Thirlwall*, a delightful work very recently published.

'I must entertain you with a few personalities inaccessible to the newspapers. I was of the dinner-party, and sat on the Prince's right. I found him a very pleasant, frank, and intelligent boy, in that respect a year or two in advance of his age (fifteen). He told me he had been at Jerusalem. It seems that his time was very narrowly limited; but he gave me some account of what he saw on his way home. During dinner we were regaled with the music of a Welsh harper; and when we had returned to the drawing-room he was brought in with a young Welsh girl in the perfection of Welsh costume, and looking as if she had been just taken out of a bandbox. . . . I had reason to be more than satisfied with the man-

ner in which my speech was received. The Prince told me I had made "a beautiful speech." But, what was most to the purpose, Sir C. Phipps, who sat by me on the other side, observed, "You understand him;" adding, as to himself rather than to me, "which very few do;" and, half an hour afterwards, as we were returning from the room, he said he was sure that the Queen would be gratified by my speech. . . . The honours of my fortunate Tenby speech have now culminated in a letter from the Queen, forwarded to me by Sir C. Phipps, thanking me for the copy I sent, and asking for some more. It is not only full of the most obliging expressions that it was possible to use, among which is that of her "satisfaction that *one* for whom her dear husband entertained so great a respect should have so well understood that *perfect* character;" but it is written throughout as if to a friend to whom she could freely communicate her thoughts and feelings. Etiquette obliges her, I believe, in writing to any but royal personages, to use the third person. But otherwise the whole tone is one of the most amiable warmth and open-heartedness, of which I could hardly give an idea without transcribing more than I should like to do, as the expression of her maternal hopes for the son, for whom she thinks it a happy circumstance that he should make his first appearance in public life on such an occasion. The conclusion was to me very touching: informing me that she "writes from the lovely spot (the Rosenau) where her dear husband was born, and which he dearly loved." I shall keep it in my writing-desk, that whenever we meet I may be able to let you have a sight of it.'

In the *Life of Bishop Wilber-*

force we have some very interesting references to the Queen and the Royal Family. At one time he was most intimate with them, and was a real power at the Palace and Castle. But the kindly feeling towards him appears to have cooled, and then ensued what he himself calls 'a withdrawal of royal favour.' It is not difficult to understand how this happened. With all his cleverness and real goodness, doubts respecting the sincerity of Samuel Wilberforce were too general and widespread to be altogether void of a real basis. It was very soon after the loss of his beautiful and accomplished wife that his relations with the Court commenced. He had been made chaplain to Prince Albert in January 1841, and in the September of that year, his wife having died in the interval, he was called upon to preach in that capacity at the Chapel Royal, Windsor. 'I felt no nervousness about the service, because I was then on high ground; but about the first dinner I did. However, things fell rapidly into their proper places; and after dinner, when the Queen came to speak to me, she spoke so pleasantly and kindly that I was quite composed by it. It was quite a small party at dinner, only eighteen in number; and in the evening we sat round a small rosewood table, the Queen, the Prince, Lord Portman, myself, &c. This evening the Queen came and spoke to me most kindly about my sermon, &c., and is going to send me in one of her carriages to the railroad to-morrow. In short, nothing can have been more kind than my treatment throughout.' Two months later he mentions a visit to Buckingham Palace: 'Prince *would* see me; showed me the young Duke of Cornwall asleep in a bassinet. Duchess of

Kent "wished to be introduced." I called at the Prince's desire. She very gracious, but speaks English poorly. "The Prince thinks very much of you." "Where do you live?" "O, it is a pity that it is so far from us." A few months later there is a very interesting letter from Wilberforce describing another visit to the Castle: 'My reception and treatment exceedingly kind. The Queen and the Prince were both at church, as also was Lord Melbourne, who paid his first visit at the same time. The Queen's meeting with him was very interesting. The exceeding pleasure which lighted up her countenance was quite touching. His behaviour to her was perfect: the fullest attentive deference of a subject, with a subdued air, your father's friend, that was quite fascinating.' During this year he was in repeated attendance at Court, and, among other places, at the Pavilion at Brighton, a place which the Queen did not like as a residence, and eventually gave up.

Various incidents are given illustrative of the kindness shown him by the Queen and Prince. He had mentioned 'accidentally' that he should like his brother Henry to succeed his brother Robert in the vicarage of East Farleigh. The Prince wrote to Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, desiring in his own name and the Queen's that the appointment should be so given. 'The Queen's great reason was,' wrote the Prince to the Lord Chancellor, 'a wish to gratify Archdeacon Samuel Wilberforce, who was, they knew, anxious to secure such a post for his brother.' A very curious incident happened on the next occasion when he preached at Court, which the Bishop was always fond of relating. A letter came to him one Saturday evening

when he was dining at Streatham, commanding him to preach the next day at Osborne. He hurried off, but found that the only way by which he could get to the Court was to persuade the railway officials to fix a carriage to a train of trucks. He wrote a letter and part of his sermon during this night journey. 'Far ahead at the other end of the train he could hear the *bump* of the first truck, and then of the next, and then of the next, until, as it neared his own turn, the ink had to be secured from upsetting, and himself and his paraphernalia prepared for the constantly recurring jolt.' He then took a boat over to Osborne, and was in time for his service.

The highest honours were showered upon him by the royal favour. Sir Robert Peel sent in his name, with the name of another person, to the Queen for the deanery of Westminster. Sir Robert was doubtless aware which name would be most acceptable to the Queen, who of course chose that of Samuel Wilberforce. Three months later Sir Robert again recommended him for the bishopric of Oxford: 'Her Majesty has been pleased cordially to approve the selection.' On this occasion Prince Albert wrote him a long letter, lecturing him on the duties of a bishop. He went down to render homage on a certain memorable occasion. It was the very day on which Sir Robert Peel had resigned, and he and the other Ministers went to render up the seals of office. 'I was down with all the Cabinet on Wednesday,' wrote the Bishop. 'The Queen was much agitated. When she held my hands in hers, as I did homage, her hands trembled greatly. The dear Queen!'

In the second volume we find some further references to the

Royal Family. On January 19th, 1853, we read: 'Off after early breakfast to Windsor. Long talk with the Prince in his room on Convocation. Tried to set plainly before him our needs, and internal action our only remedy. He spoke, as always, kindly and plainly, and paid great attention to my view. The Queen kind in manner. The Prince full of preparation for invasion.' There is no doubt that the Bishop was longing to recover his influence at Court. In one of the entries of his journal we see an intention of writing a pamphlet in defence of Prince Albert, who at this time was very generally and very undeservedly unpopular. At the same time it is clear that it was not so much the Queen as Prince Albert who had been led to form an unfavourable opinion of the Bishop, and of course her Majesty would not fail to be much influenced by the judgment of the Prince Consort. Bishop Wilberforce had a great friend in the Hon. A. Gordon, the son of Lord Aberdeen; and when Lord Aberdeen ceased to be Premier, the Bishop thought that the son might, without impropriety, be the means of serving his interests with the Queen. 'There is one thing which, if your father could do it naturally and with propriety, I should greatly thank him for doing. I *know* the pains which have been taken by Lord — to injure my character with the Queen, and especially to make her distrust me. Perhaps *you*, more than most people, can understand the secret bitter pain which this has caused me. She has long had from me the warm affection of a loyal heart, quickened by a sense of personal kindness; and to feel that she has, by the interested machinations of a most unscrupulous man, been led to form

an entirely wrong estimate, as I believe, of me, has given me continual grief. Now what I should like would be, if it were possible, for your father to have said anything to show what I believe would be his estimate of me in any conversation with the Queen.' It appears that Lord Aberdeen made no difficulty about carrying out the Bishop's wishes. We find him writing: 'My dearest Arthur, I will not attempt to thank your dear father for his kindness. If that honest heart of our Queen could once believe that I had rather die than breathe a dishonest thought, I should be a happier man.' It appears that the Queen and Prince Albert had regularly talked the Bishop over with the Earl of Aberdeen. The Prince objected to him thus: 'The Bishop does everything for some object,' Lord Aberdeen rejoined, 'Yes, sir, but when a bad motive?' Visiting Balmoral in the autumn, Lord Aberdeen elicited from the Prince Consort more specifically his suspicions respecting the Bishop's sincerity and disinterestedness. The Prince's objections were that in earlier life the Bishop had sought the preceptorship to the Prince of Wales; and secondly, that in a discussion with the Prince on the Miracle of the Swine, he had unduly modified his own views to meet those of the Prince. It is hard to see how there could have been any imputation on the Bishop, even if he had desired the office of preceptor to the Prince of Wales. But, as a matter of fact, the Bishop always looked upon the idea of such an office with peculiar horror. The other imputation he distinctly disclaimed. Years before, they had had a discussion about evil spirits: 'I said that it was far best for us to believe in a devil that suggested evil to us, for that otherwise we

were driven to make every man his own devil.'

Afterwards we have repeated notices of the Queen. February 7th, '55.—Off to Windsor, to Chapter of the Garter, and saw the Queen afterwards. She was cheerful and very affable.' 'April 18.—Off to Oxford, whence by train to Windsor. Chapter of the Garter for Emperor of the French. The Emperor looked exulting and exceedingly pleased. The banquet magnificent. I between Baroness — and Miss —, who lively and pleasant. She told me the Queen was very nervous on their arrival, waited a long time; at last heard of them reaching the station. The Queen went down and received them at the carriage-door. As soon as the Empress saw her she stood up in the carriage; the Emperor jumped out, and the Queen saluted him; the Empress and he were apparently very nervous. The Empress fearful of the Queen not liking her; the Queen soon put her at her ease. At night the Queen spoke to me: "All went off very well, I think; I was afraid of making some mistake. You would not let me have in writing what I was to say to him. Then we put the ribbon on wrong! But I think it all went off well, on the whole." Things evidently appear on the mend. That year he goes to the confirmation of the Princess Royal at the Castle. 'Interesting—she devout, composed, earnest; youngest sister much affected—the Queen and Prince also. The Queen spoke most kindly to me after; all very kind.' We have no further notices in the second volume; but they may be looked forward to, in confidence, in some number in the promised third and concluding volume of the biography. He obtained the gratification of his strong desire

of a translation to a more important see, which would hardly have happened if her Majesty had continued to withhold her confidence from him. We have heard the pleasant story told that when Lord Palmerston mentioned one day in company that he had been studying Hebrew, the Bishop suggested that he had better *translate Samuel!*

In the recently published life of Bishop McIlvaine—a most admirable American prelate, almost as well known in this country and on the Continent as in America—we have some very interesting notices of the Prince of Wales, first in this country and afterwards in America:

“But I must tell you about the Prince of Wales. Think of his having spent about a half-hour with his suite last Saturday *in my house!* They got here on Saturday morning last. I had appointed to see the Duke of Newcastle early for arrangements about church next day. So I went; and during our conversation I expressed the pleasure I should have in the party, during their expected drive into the country, alighting at my humble house. He immediately said it should be done. I know none of the suite but Sir Henry Holland, who had been to my house a week before, while in separation from the party. . . . The Prince shook hands with us all. They remained some twenty or thirty minutes. . . . From my house they drove, and I with them, to that of one of my neighbours—a very handsome mansion in very handsome grounds, where they partook of a splendid repast. . . . I was thankful for the opportunity of preaching the simple plain gospel on such an occasion. The impression everywhere is most favourable. The people of all

grades, except the foreign population, in which there is simply no American feeling, are delighted with the opportunity of showing him, and, through him, his honoured mother in England, the utmost respect. Everybody thinks the visit will do great good, drawing the two countries together, making America and England realise how much they are one.” . . . During the Prince’s residence in America (and, indeed, ever afterwards) the Bishop had the honour of receiving, on more than one occasion, proofs of his regard. At West Point the Prince invited him to come to his hotel, though the hour was late, and there received him with marked kindness. And when driving in his open carriage, on recognising the Bishop walking at some distance, he at once drove up to him, stopped the carriage, and graciously alighted to converse with him. When the Bishop subsequently visited England, from time to time, he was honoured with several special marks of the Prince’s esteem, who took occasion to express his pleasant remembrance of their first meeting in America.

“Last evening I went, at the request of the Prince, to meet him at Buckingham Palace. They were all packed up to start on their Eastern tour. I took coffee there, and bade him good-bye. All the meeting was very cordial and free, his manners just as when I met him at my house. . . . Lord Wriothlesley Russell is very intimate in the Palace and with the Queen. He told me that he had told the Queen of his having taken me and my wife into the private apartments of the Castle in 1853, and she said, ‘You did quite right, and I desire that particular attention be showed to all visitors from America.’” . . . The Queen’s birthday being kept on

June 1st, the Bishop took his daughters to drive in Hyde Park that afternoon, as there would be an unusual show of equipages worth seeing. "As we were proceeding," he says, "in a long line of carriages, the coachman turned, and said, 'The Prince's carriage is coming.' The whole line stopped. I stood, and took off my hat. The Princess was with him; they were bowing as they recognised the salutations of the people. As soon as his eye fell on me, though it was full ten years since he had seen me last, his recognition was instant and most emphatic. The countenance and whole manner showed surprise and pleasure. He raised his hat, and bowed till his carriage got quite beyond mine. Of course I returned the cordial salute. It was very remarkable to find such remembrance after so many years. Emboldened by that marked and gracious salutation, I ventured to address a letter to the Prince, expressing what, ever since it pleased God, in His great goodness, to raise him up from that extreme illness, it was in my heart to write, but which the fear of seeming intrusion, amidst the thronging congratulations of his grateful people, restrained—namely, how truly I felt with them in their deep anxiety; and when their fears were turned to joy, in their abounding thankfulness." The Bishop was honoured the next day by the following letter from General Sir William Knollys, Chamberlain to the Prince:

"Marlborough House, June 4.

"I am desired by the Prince of Wales to thank you very sincerely for your letter of yesterday's date, and to inform you that it will give his Royal Highness great pleasure to see you if you could make it convenient to call

here at three o'clock to-morrow."

"His reception at Marlborough House "was very cordial." The Prince, after conversing with him freely on many important subjects of national interest, presented him to the Princess and the children. During the interview the Prince said he was expecting to have, in a few weeks, a garden-party, and asked the Bishop to write the names of the members of his family, that he might invite them. The Prince and Princess then handed to the Bishop their photographs, on which they did him the further honour to write their names. "The whole interview," writes the Bishop, "was very gratifying, perfectly informal—a family reception." All the Bishop's party, eight in number, had the honour to receive cards of invitation. . . . "I must leave the account of the garden-party yesterday to them, except that I presented all the party to the Prince and Princess, and they shook hands with each; and some of them to the Duke of Edinburgh. It was very nice!"

It would, however, be a great mistake to suppose that the Queen is under 'prelatical' influences. It is probable that in the time of Bishop Wilberforce's Court influence, she might have been strongly influenced by the 'Anglican' system; but Prince Albert's theological tastes did not lie in this direction. Since she has taken up her residence in Scotland she has always recognised Presbyterianism as the established religion north of the Tweed. Her sympathies have been strongly bestowed this way. In the *Life of Norman McLeod* we have some very touching references to the Queen. Our readers will remember that in the *Queen's Highland Journal* there is a reference to

Dr. McLeod. 'Anything finer I never heard,' wrote her Majesty. 'The sermon, entirely extempore, was quite admirable, so simple and yet so eloquent, and so beautifully argued and put.' McLeod says of his sermon: 'I preached without a note the same sermon I preached at Morven; and I never looked once at the royal seat, but solely at the congregation. I tried to forget the great ones I saw, and remember the great ones I saw not.' He says in his Journal, that while sitting on a block of granite in a field, 'I was roused from my reverie by some one asking me if I was the clergyman who had preached that day. I was soon in the presence of the Queen and Prince, when her Majesty came forward and said, with a sweet, kind, and smiling face, "We wish to thank you for your sermon." She then asked me how my father was, what was the name of my parish, &c., and they both continued their quiet evening walk alone.' In 1861 he writes, 'I preached, by no means comfortably to myself. I could not remember one sentence, and had to trust to the moment for expression. The Queen was most cordial in her thanks for the comfort I gave her, and commanded me to return next year. I dined at the Castle, and spent really a charming evening. I had a long walk with Lady Augusta Bruce during the interval, and learned much from her about the death of that noble loving woman, the Duchess of Kent, and of the Queen's grief. She was a most God-fearing woman. I have been presented by the Queen with a delightful volume of hymns which her mother was fond of. The Queen's distress was deep and very bitter, but in every respect such as a daughter ought to feel. The sud-

denness—unexpected by even Sir J. Clark—of course shocked her. After dinner I had a most interesting conversation for about half an hour with the Prince Consort, and a good long one with the Queen.'

When the Queen first came to Scotland, after the death of Prince Albert, she commanded the attendance of Dr. McLeod at Balmoral. He seems to have been honoured greatly by her Majesty's confidence, of which he speaks freely, though he also obviously maintains a becoming reticence. We make some profoundly interesting citations: 'I am never tempted to conceal any conviction from the Queen; for I feel she sympathises with what is true, and likes the speaker to utter the truth exactly as he believes it. . . . All has passed well—that is to say, God enabled me to speak in private and in public to the Queen in such a way as seemed to me to be truth, the truth in God's sight; that which I believe she needed, though I felt it would be very trying to her spirit to receive it. And what fills me with deepest thanksgiving is, that she has received it, and written to me such a kind tender letter of thanks for it, which shall be treasured in my heart while I live.

'After dinner I was summoned unexpectedly to the Queen's room. She was alone. She met me, and, with an unutterably sad expression, which filled my eyes with tears, at once began to speak about the Prince. It is impossible for me to recall distinctly the sequence or substance of that long conversation. She spoke of his excellences—his love, his cheerfulness, how he was everything to her. She said she never shut her eyes to trials, but liked to look them in the face; how she

would never shrink from duty, but that all was at present done mechanically; that her highest ideas of purity and love were obtained from him, and that God could not be displeased with her love. But there was nothing morbid in her grief. I spoke freely to her about all I felt regarding him—the love of the nation and their sympathy—and took every opportunity of bringing before her the reality of God's love and sympathy, her noble calling as a queen, the value of her life to the nation, the blessedness of prayer.'

In 1866 he writes: 'I was asked by the Queen to visit her at Osborne during the holidays. I went there on Monday, 2d of January. The Queen, with most condescending kindness, commanded me to plant a tree in memory of my visit.' In October 1871 he writes from Balmoral: 'I preached extempore on "Our Father which art in heaven," and on the education of man beyond the grave. We have here Helps and Mr. Forster, M.P.; and we have had tremendous theological talks till two P.M. I have the greatest possible respect for Forster's abilities and truthfulness. The Queen has asked me to remain till to-morrow. I hope to have another set-to with the M.P. He seems to expect the same, as he said "Hurrah!" when I told him I was to remain.'

In another passage relating to the Queen we have also an interesting reference to the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, our future monarch. 'After dinner the Queen invited me to her room, where I found the Princess Helena and Marchioness of Ely. The Queen sat down to spin at a nice Scotch wheel, while I read Robert Burns to her: "Tam O'Shanter" and "A man's a man for a' that"—her favour-

ites. . . The Prince of Wales sent a message asking me to go and see him. When I was there the young Prince of Wales fell on the floor-cloth, after lunch, with such a thump, as left a swollen blue mark on his forehead. He cried for a minute, and then laughed most bravely. There was no fuss whatever made about him, by father, mother, or any one; yet it must have been very sore, and I would have been nervous about it if it had happened to Polly. He is a dear sweet child. All seemed to be very happy. . . I saw and kissed the child to-day; and a more healthy, perfect, or delightful child I never saw.'

After Dr. McLeod's death a most interesting autograph letter was addressed by the Queen to one of his brothers. A large number of cases are on record in which the Queen has written in a most kindly way on such occasions.

An extremely interesting work, which has been very recently published, the *Life of Sir Charles Lyell*, has some most interesting references to the Queen and the Royal Family. Sir Charles had the honour of paying a visit at Osborne. 'It is a very pleasant residence,' he writes, 'like a small German principality palace. . . The Prince invited us to join the ladies and sit down at their table; and I was asked by the Queen news of New York doings, and made them merry with Soft Shell, Old Hunkers, &c.; and gave them an account of the Exhibition prospects, United States prosperity, &c.' Here is a curious incident relating to the Duke and Duchess of Montpensier: 'They called suddenly and unexpectedly on the Queen—not *incog.*, but in their public capacity—when she was in a delicate state of health, and not knowing exactly

what to do, and fearing she might commit herself, she very naturally sent off to Lord Palmerston to come directly; but before he got there they had waited and waited till they got out of humour, and set off in about thirty hours afterwards.' 'The Queen told me that her sons had asked her if the Colenso whose arithmetic they had studied was the Bishop; and had remarked, "Then he must be very clever." I said that my nephew Arthur had said, "I don't like Colenso; he gives me hard sums to do." She laughed, and asking his age, said, "All mine were older."'

'At Balmoral.—The day I went to dine there, Saturday last, I had first a long walk—Sir James Clark and I—with Mr. Birch and his pupil, a pleasing lively boy, whose animated description of the conjurer, or Wizard of the North, whom they had seen a few days before, was very amusing. "He (the wizard) had cut to pieces mamma's pocket-handkerchief, then darned it and ironed it, so that it was as entire as ever; he had fired a pistol, and caused five or six watches to go through Gibbs's (one of their footmen) head, and all were tied to a chair on Gibbs's other side," and so forth; "but papa (Prince Albert) knows how all these things are done, and had the watches really gone through Gibbs's head he could hardly have looked so well, though he was confounded." Sometimes I walked alone with the child, who asked me the names of plants, and to let him see spiders, &c., through my magnifying glass, sometimes with the tutor, whom I continue to like more as I become better acquainted. After our ramble of two hours and a half through some wild scenery, I was sent for to join another party; where I found

the Queen, Prince, and Lord John by a deep pool on the river Dee, fishing for trout and salmon.

'After the Queen had entered the Castle the Prince kept me so long, and we kept one another so late, talking on all kinds of subjects, that a messenger came from her Majesty saying it was only a quarter of an hour to dinner-time.

'After the ladies had gone to the drawing-room we had much lively talk, which the Prince promoted greatly, telling some amusing stories himself, and encouraging others by laughing at theirs.

'Next day I went to church. The prayer for the parish, magistracy, Queen and Royal Family, judges, ministers of religion, Parliament, and whole nation, was just such as you would have liked, and in excellent taste, with nothing which a republican jealous of equality could, I think, have objected to, and which I believe our sovereign and her husband would thoroughly appreciate the simplicity of. They shoved the box on the end of a long pole to Queen and Prince and maids of honour, as to all the rest of the congregation, and each dropped in their piece of coin. After church I had much conversation alone with Prince Albert, whose mind is in full activity on a variety of grave subjects, while he is invigorating his body with field-sports.'

We find a very interesting letter to Mr. John Murray the publisher, after the death of the Prince Consort, in which Lyell sums up his impressions respecting him:

'The late Prince Consort certainly deserves the most eloquent *éloge* that one of your best writers can give him in the *Quarterly*. . . I believe it was a common idea that he was too reserved, but he was very much the reverse. I am sure that not a few can affirm that he talked most freely and without

restraint on a great variety of subjects on which many public men would have been somewhat afraid of committing themselves. He was certainly very careful, as became a man in his position, to avoid personalities; but he spoke out his opinions fearlessly, often on the most speculative as well as on practical subjects, and always listened patiently to what one had to say on the other side. . . . The quantity of work he got through, in spite of innumerable interruptions, was immense. His foreign correspondence alone, which the public here knew nothing of, would have been thought sufficient occupation for one who had nothing else to do. I remember on two occasions, when he was called upon to write addresses, one as President of the British Association, and one again for the Social Science meeting, that he told me that they taxed him rather too much, as his other engagements were so numerous, and many of them requiring much thought. . . . When I first knew him, about fifteen years ago, I found that he had read my *First Travels in North America* with some attention, and he referred more than once to what I had said on educational matters. He was very sanguine of the progress that might be made in his own time in the diffusion of popular education. Twelve or thirteen years later he was equally zealous in the cause, but expressed his disappointment that "all that we of this generation in this country can hope is to teach those who will educate the generation that is to follow." . . . He often alluded to the want of cultivation of the German language amongst the higher class, and the number of diplomatists who had been sent to German courts, and even important embassies, who knew little or

nothing of the language of the people. It is well known how much he tried to remedy this by giving prizes at Eton, &c. When first the excellence and originality of his speeches and addresses on various occasions attracted attention, it was very commonly asked, Who wrote them for him? When I declared to some who put this question that I was convinced he got no help from any one in the way of ideas or opinions, I found people very incredulous. It seemed to me that for years he was underrated, at least that his great talents were not duly appreciated, and that his character was not understood. . . . I never made any notes of conversations which I had with the Prince, but I have a vivid recollection of many which I have never repeated to any one, thinking that it would be a breach of confidence.'

'I only got a short walk in the garden with Sir James Clark, when the Prince of Hesse sent for me, and as I entered, the Princess Alice received me, and said she remembered me since Balmoral days, and introduced me to her husband. Her manners are very charming, and she talks most freely on all subjects. He has really read me as far as the end of glacial chapters with attention. They had been discussing the time it would take for all the existing races to have come from one original pair. Arthur Stanley is evidently a very great favourite with the Princess. . . . The Queen sent for me before four o'clock, and talked with me alone for an hour and a quarter, mostly about Prince Albert, leading me also to talk of him. Arthur Stanley recommended her to read my *Antiquity*. She asked me a good deal about the Darwinian theory, as well as *Antiquity of Man*. She has a clear understanding, and thinks quite

fearlessly for herself, and yet very modestly. Nothing could be more natural and touching than her admiration for the Prince. She said that for one who had so much enjoyment in the present, which he found wherever he was, it was remarkable that he was cheerful whenever he had to change place or business. If they were at Balmoral or Osborne, and were called to Windsor, he not only went, but never allowed himself to be put out. As soon as we had done talking over books, &c., I went to the Swiss Cottage, where the Prince of Hesse and Prince Alfred were waiting . . . The Princess Helena and her next sister joined us at the museum. I then started with Becker and Ruland on a geological walk along the seaside, and in our way fell in first with the Queen driving Princess Alice in a pony-car. They went alone, without any servant, to the seaside, called a boat, and took a row afterwards. Prince Alfred took a boat, and rowed the Prince of Hesse out to the Queen's boat. He had no sailor to help him. In our walk we fell in with Miss Hilliard and Princess Beatrice, who asked us to come to a small miniature fort constructed in the grounds by Prince Alfred, with a moat and rampart and drawbridge. Here she played all sorts of pranks with Becker, who barked as a dog, and got into a small miniature barrack, and then shut her up in it, and so on. She has wonderful spirits. We went over the kitchen in the Swiss Cottage, in which the royal children cook all sorts of things, quite a large *batterie de cuisine*, and they invite Becker and others to come and eat the produce. When the Swiss Cottage, in part of which the gardener lives, was built, the boys used to work two or three hours a day in earnest

with the labourers, and got certificates of work done from the foreman, and sent in a regular bill, which the Prince Consort paid exactly according to the then rate of wages, to give them an idea of such things. Then we went over the tool-house—the initials of every child on each watering-pot, wheelbarrow, &c.; then over the separate garden-plots belonging to each, from the Princess Royal's down to Princess Beatrice's, each of equal size. The Queen has just started, with Lady Mount-Edgumbe and Sir James Clark, to see Netley Hospital. It is almost the first time she has proposed anything of the kind, and they are all glad she is going. I take for granted that Princess Alice has also gone, but I did not hear. The Queen has always dined privately with her own family, and will, I suppose, do so to-day. A most beautiful small aneroid, not bigger than a very large pocket-watch, has come down from Negretti, for the Queen to measure heights with at Balmoral. They have a fine telescope for star-gazing, and the night I arrived saw Jupiter and his satellites, which I only heard about to-day. At every turn one meets the hand of the Prince Consort. . . I daresay Mary and Katherine will have told you my Osborne news. It was a great satisfaction to have a good long talk quite alone with the Queen for an hour and a quarter, and about one for whom I had such a regard, and for whom I felt, though it would not be etiquette to say so, such real friendship, as I did for the late Prince Albert. I do not think she has given way more than is perfectly natural: all necessary duties she has performed. . . She said he was always cheerful, and determined to think everything for the best; a short life,

among other things, of which he had sometimes a slight presentiment, in spite of his good health. She has, of course, been reading many serious books, and I asked her if she had read what Sir Benjamin Brodie has said about death. She said she had, and was much struck with his observing that if we knew what those we had loved were doing in another world, or if we even knew the exact time of our own death, it would alter the whole complexion of our lives, and probably make us perform our duties less well in this life. I had a talk with Princess Alice and her husband separately in their rooms on another occasion, and, another evening, a long conversation with the Queen, Prince and Princess of Hesse, and Prince Alfred, very cheerful, about books and things in general. One morning I had a walk with the Prince of Hesse and Prince Alfred, and no one else; and Prince Alfred showed me over the museum in the garden, in which are all the birds stuffed which he and the Prince of Wales had shot in different countries.'

We quote the following passage from a new book of travels:*

'In March 1880, there arrived at Flushing the yacht of the Prince of Wales, with his Royal Highness and Prince Leopold on board. During their stay they visited the neighbouring town of Middelburg, accompanied by a Dutch official. There they entered the shop of an Israelitish vendor of antiquities, of whom the Prince of Wales purchased a pair of old Delft vases, which he directed him to send on board his yacht. In the evening, while his Royal Highness was on deck, the dealer made his appearance with the vases. He was dressed in his

best clothes, and on his arrival at Flushing had evidently learned the rank of the customer. Having delivered up the vases, he accosted a Dutch gentleman present, and desired him to point out to him the Prince of Wales. His request having been complied with, "Do you think, sir," said he, speaking Dutch in a low voice, "that his Highness would mind shaking hands with me?" The oddness of the inquiry caused the other to smile; and ere he could reply the Prince of Wales, followed by his brother, came up, and, observing the dealer's attentive glances, asked if anything was the matter.

'Having received an explanation, he very good-naturedly extended his hand to the dealer, saying, with a smile, "I am the Prince of Wales, and this is my brother Prince Leopold. I have much pleasure in shaking hands with you." The vendor of antiquities made an obeisance, and returned home in great exultation. The fact that he had the honour of shaking hands with the future King of England will probably descend to his lowest posterity as an anecdote well worthy of being retained in the family.'

In Ticknor's *Life and Letters* there is an interesting note relating to the Queen. Mr. Abbotts Lawrence, the American Minister in England, writes to a friend, 'I was present a few evenings since, when the Queen asked Mr. Macaulay what new book he could recommend for her reading. He replied that he would recommend her Majesty to send for the *History of Spanish Literature*, by an American, Mr. Ticknor of Boston.' In this work there is an interesting letter from Sir E. Head to Mr. Ticknor, written in 1860: 'I am able to tell you that every one in this country sets the highest value on the courtesy and

* *Land of Dykes and Windmills*. By F. S. Bird. (Low & Co.)

friendly feeling towards the Prince of Wales. I may begin from the top, for I had the opportunity of talking both to the Queen and Prince Albert on the subject last week. The Prince appeared in good spirits, and perfectly recovered from his long voyage. Prince Albert expressed himself to me personally in terms much stronger than was necessary with reference to the Prince's visit. I attributed a large portion of its success to the Prince of Wales's own courtesy and good-nature, which is strictly true.'

Not only does the Queen read all the best books, but she sees all the best people, and obtains from them an additional knowledge beyond books can confer. Her Majesty always keeps thoroughly abreast of the events of the day. We know instances of persons of great musical genius being invited to sing before the Queen. The latest explorer of Central Africa is undoubtedly Mr. Thompson, and in his work Mr. Thompson tells us how he was summoned into the royal presence. In Mr. Blaikie's *Personal Life of Dr. Livingstone* we have a very interesting narrative. He was honoured by the Queen with a private interview: 'She sent for Livingstone, who attended her Majesty at the Palace without ceremony, in his black coat and blue trousers, and his cap surrounded with a stripe of gold lace. This was his usual attire, and the cap had now become the appropriate distinction of one of her Majesty's consuls—an official position to which the traveller attaches great importance, as giving him consequence in the eyes of natives and authority over the members of the expedition. The Queen conversed with him affably for half an hour on the subject of his travels. Dr. Livingstone told her Majesty that he would now be

able to say to the natives that he had seen his chief, his not having done so before having been a constant subject of surprise to the children of the African wilderness. He mentioned to her Majesty also that the people were in the habit of inquiring whether his chief were wealthy; and when he assured them that she was very wealthy, they would ask how many cows she had got, a question at which the Queen laughed heartily.'

In the *Life of Charles Kingsley* we have a few references to the Queen and Royal Family, although these are of a guarded kind, and more reticence is observed on the subject than in other biographies. When Charles Kingsley was Professor of Modern History of Cambridge, the Prince of Wales attended his lectures, and Mr. Kingsley also acted as his private instructor. Beyond all other men, however, the late Dean Stanley was most closely concerned in the education of the Prince. In Stanley's *Sermons in the East* there is much indirect information about the Prince. We have heard Dr. Lightfoot, the Bishop of Durham, give some account of the Prince during his stay at Cambridge. Not only in the *Life of Kingsley*, but also in the *Life of Dean Alford*, there are some interesting references. Alford was thoroughly loyal, and missed no opportunity of seeing the Queen on any public occasion. Then he became a royal chaplain, and had to preach at stated seasons. On the first occasion 'the Prince Consort, the King of the Belgians, the Princess Alice, and the Prince Louis of Hesse were present, with her Majesty. . . Mrs. Stanley died on Wednesday, after only a week's illness. The Queen was most kind, and offered to telegraph for her son; but it would have been

no good, he was gone so far up the Nile.' In 1870 he goes 'to the Queen's concert at Buckingham Palace: very interesting; Nilsson, Patti, and old Mario.' We have only the record of one personal interview, which was on December 4, 1864:

'Preached at the chapel from 1 Cor. xiii. 12. After service the librarian showed me the library. Whilst we were there the two young Princes came in to look at some portfolios and photographs of Raffaello's works. They are nice intelligent lads. Prince Arthur is handsome. On my return to the Deanery I heard the Queen had sent to say that she wished to see me with the Dean at three. We were shown into a small room, the Prince Consort's private sitting-room, full of furniture, with many little comforts about. The Queen entered by a door opposite. We all stood; the interview lasted about half an hour. Her manner was very kind and gentle, quite such as to lead us on and make one at home.' After the death of the Dean, of course we find the Queen writing in her own kindly sympathetic way to the widow.

We have thus brought together a collection of passages—which is, however, by no means exhaustive—relating to the private life and character of her Majesty and some members of her family. Next month we hope to return to the subject. The different authorities cited are very various, but the consensus they exhibit is extremely remarkable. The Queen's existence is passed *en évidence*. It is in the full glare 'of that fierce light that beats upon a throne.' The general and most impressive result has been to raise loyalty in our own country into a native passion, a feeling of reverence and of personal affection. There is no

living potentate who has so mingled his life with that of his people, made his private affairs an open secret, and has given publicity to the private details of life. There is no monarch of past history whose life has been so completely revealed from first to last, and endures the scrutiny so well. For a real knowledge and estimate of character in the case of other monarchs, we have had to wait till long-closed archives of State are unsealed and private memoirs brought to light. Not till recent years have we fairly understood, if even now we fully understand, the character of our other Queens Regnant, Elizabeth and Anne. But that name of happiest omen, Victoria, is crowned not only with the triumphs of war and diplomacy, but no less with the victories of peace. She rules that woman's kingdom, in which peace, gentleness, and affection are the primal powers. The elements of her character are plainly discernible. As in Wordsworth's 'Vision of Delight,' we have 'endurance, firmness, temperance, skill.' We have, as its basis, a deep unaffected feeling of religion and conscientiousness. On the one hand, we have great natural energy and good sense; on the other hand, a culture of extraordinary extent and variety, and an experience in public affairs which is almost entirely without parallel. The keen sensitiveness of a high-toned woman, the comprehensive and catholic sympathies of a patriotic monarch, mark the Queen and mother of the land. 'Happy is the nation that is in such a case,' whose sovereign evokes its chivalry, elevates its standard of purity and honour, commands its loving obedience, adorns its roll of annals; a sovereign most truly womanly, most truly regal!

WITH THE IRISH EMIGRANTS.

I AM a sailor-doctor by profession. This is equivalent to stating that I do not go to sea for pleasure. On the contrary, no sooner do I set foot on the deck of the vessel to which I have been appointed, than all my care and responsibility begins, a burden which only falls off my shoulders when the cruise or the commission ends, and I step once more on shore, a free man, for the time being at all events.

You may judge, therefore, of the feeling of enjoyment, rest, and comfort I experienced in finding myself lately on board one of the crack Liverpool liners, bound for New York City, a passenger among passengers, with neither care nor worry on my mind, as free as the brave nor'easter that was helping to rush us down the Irish Channel. No letters to write, no papers to sign, no sick to see. Jones might faint in the stoke-hole, Cheeks the marine might blow his thumb off, or the captain of the maintop might tumble from aloft, but no breathless sick-bay man would come rushing to me for assistance. It was, indeed, a holiday. A better ship too or a safer never dipped prow into blue water. From stem to stern, on deck or 'tween decks, man-o'-war's-man though I am, I could hardly find a fault with her. No better mess, either, did I ever have in 'the service;' and, as far as the officers of the ship were concerned, no jollier messmates. The captain sat at the head of one table, the purser at the other, and opposite to him the doctor; and the prin-

cipal aim and object of these three gentlemen all the voyage through seemed to be to make the passengers feel happy and at home. The purser in particular I shall never forget. He was always in good-humour, always pleasant and pleasing, possessed of an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, and wore a smile on his rosy face that would have made the veriest land-lubber feel certain in his own mind that there is no life like the life of a sailor, and that living on shore is all a mistake.

I have sailed several times from England to India, and *vice versa*, in the P. & O. boats, and probably I ought to say that that company's bill of fare is a trifle longer than ours on this Atlantic steamer was; but, in justice to the latter, I must also add, that I never lived better in any English hotel than I did on board of her: to say nothing of the extra appetite the ocean gives one, combined with perfect freedom from care and worry.

May I be allowed to add, parenthetically, that I wonder a voyage to and from the States is so seldom resorted to by invalids belonging to our own country? What a world of good it would do to men of business and professional men, for instance, whose nervous systems have suffered from overwork! Do they fear the sea? They would be as safe and comfortable in these splendid liners as they could be on shore. *Mal de mer*, is that the bugbear? Bah! we weren't well out of Queenstown till everybody was on deck, looking as jolly as sand-

boys and as happy as kings. The expense? I question if one could live more cheaply while travelling anywhere. Thirty guineas only for a return ticket, with first-class everything included therein, bar wine; and very little of that is needed at sea, for ozone is far better than wine. If the invalid or pleasure-seeker were to spend a month in the cities of the States, he would find an hotel system which for general management and cheapness can hardly be equalled in the world.

But there, I am not writing at present for invalids; and I do not think there was one on board fore or aft, but we were strong in the Irish emigrant element. Here in the saloon, for example, was a landlord going away to the Far West in the hopes of bettering himself. With him were his pretty and rather delicate-looking young wife and two brave and charming children. For all the trouble and trials he had come through in the old country, O'B—— hadn't let down his heart; indeed, he was the life and soul of the quarter-deck, though maybe his mirth did not always come right away up from his heart.

'Och, well,' he said to me one evening, with the least bit in the world of a sigh, 'sure Nebraska must be a queer place if it isn't any better than Ireland, for sorrow a taste of rent I've taken for two years and more.'

We had fine weather all the way down Channel, and made a quick passage to Queenstown. We lay off here, and tugs brought the emigrants alongside, to the number of nine hundred and over. It was afternoon, bright and clear, though somewhat cold; and everybody had come on deck to see them arrive. A motley crew they were, too, that were packed as thickly as herrings on the deck of

that not over-cleanly but terribly fussy wee tug-boat. From stern to stern was one solid mass of humanity, a sea of heads and shoulders. Of both sexes were they, pretty evenly mixed, and of all ages from seven to seventy. One could easily believe that yonder babe in arms was merely a pioneer in embryo—that in all probability he would turn out to be a good citizen of the Great Republic, and that there was even a chance of his being one day elected President. But look at that aged lean-cheeked crone, with her gray elfin locks escaping from under her shawl, who wrings her withered hands and weeps as she takes one more look homewards at the green shores she will never see again. What good can she ever be or do in the far-off plains of Nevada or Wisconsin? But doubtless she has a story of her own, if we only knew it.

I have not yet told the reader that the season was spring, the month April, and the weather therefore somewhat raw and chilly. We could not help wondering, therefore, to see the large majority of these emigrants so very thinly clad. The 'boys' were bare-necked, and carried bits of ash saplings and bits of bundles; but no signs of top-coat or waterproof had they, nor did I during the whole voyage observe that any one of them possessed such a necessity. But they were mostly young, and looked raw-boned and wiry enough to endure anything. The lasses—many of whom were pretty and comely—were just as badly off in the matter of dress as the lads. Their garments were scanty, and they nearly all had little tartan shawls over their otherwise bare heads. They put one in mind of the factory-girls of Dundee or Aberdeen. One would have thought, to look at them, they

were merely going on a few hours' outing instead of a ten days' voyage across the wide and (sometimes) stormy Atlantic. But where, I asked myself, is the luggage belonging to these poor creatures? Not getting a satisfactory answer from myself, I put the same question to my friend the purser. 'Well,' he said, 'most of their luggage they carry on their backs; the rest consists of a bed and a blanket.'

It wasn't a feather-bed, I felt sure, that the purser referred to, only a bit of a mattress; and many had not that, but slept all the voyage on the bare boards. They were not, however, to be pitied on this account, for the bare clean boards of a comfortable ship are infinitely to be preferred to the leeseide of a mud fence on the bare hillside. Over and above the mattress and blanket, the emigrants have to provide themselves with a tin pot or pannikin and a plate and a spoon. Indeed, their whole outfit is a very light and airy one; but then the voyage is not long, they have been used to rough it in the old country, and they never grumble while going to the new.

The tug-boats now began to disgorge themselves, and the emigrants to crowd on board, and the purser stood by to collect tickets, with a view to prevent stowaways from taking an uninvited voyage with us. But stowaways do get on board nevertheless, not so much at Queenstown, however, as at Liverpool. If they are found out before reaching the former port they are landed; if not, they are set to work, and a very unenviable life some of them have. I would not advise any one to ship as stow-away on a Liverpool liner. A stowaway's lines do not fall in pleasant places.

Six guineas is the price of the

passage-money to New York; and it speaks well for the sons and daughters of old Erin, that in cases innumerable the passage-money of the emigrants is paid by relations who have previously gone to the West and done well. Probably this fact accounts for the presence of so many aged men and women among them.

It would seem that the class of emigrants is subject to change, for some five or six years ago it was chiefly clerks, artisans, and young men of that kind, who went out; now it is principally such poor people as I have just named—tillers of the soil, in fact.

But now we are off: orders are being issued from the officers on the bridge, the steam snorts and roars from the pipe, the engines rattle and revolve, and the great ship heads away for the ocean, just as the gloaming shadows begin to fall on the land.

I had a friend forward in the steerage, or I should have had no excuse to go there. He lived in the butcher's cabin, and rejoiced in being a brave old-fashioned 'die-hard' Scotch terrier-dog. Now the night was exceedingly fine, the good ship hardly ever lifted her head, and a big round moon silvered the sea, and made the long wake we left behind us look like a pathway of snow. A large number of emigrants remained on deck for many hours; but there was quite a crowd in the fore-cabin nevertheless, for remember we were eleven hundred souls all told. But I shall not attempt to describe the scene in these 'tween decks further than to say it was a very animated one indeed, and not over-savoury. Here was a group gathered around a white-haired old emigrant who, Bible in hand, was preaching; here another group singing hymns; here an old woman praying while the tears

streamed down over her cheeks and nose; here still another group was squatting on the deck, having 'a sly dram,' and singing 'Auld Lang Syne,' and yonder a quieter group squatting under the lamp playing cards. But all were animated, and all seemingly imbued with the idea that the sea had no discomforts and no terrors to tremble at. It came on to blow a little next day, the ship began to nod and bow to the advancing waves; and when I went forward in the evening to see my die-hard, behold, I found no soul in the steerage. Hushed were the voices of the psalm-singers, silent the chanters of hymns, gone the wassailers, and gone the players of cards; but from the sleeping-cabins all around me came a moaning and a groaning that told me plainly enough that

'The flowers o' the forest were a' wede
away.'

Thus passed the first and second nights of our emigrants' life at sea.

The weather settled down now into what we might call the moderately fine. There was a bit of a breeze, and it was in the right direction, blowing about east and by south; so fore and aft canvas was hung up, and this served to steady us, and gave the ship a trifle of a list to leeward; and our cabin passengers, walking on the weather quarter-deck, were quite proud at finding themselves able, apparently, to use their sea-legs. But there, with the cabin passengers I have positively nothing to do; I must lay for'ard.

Well, then, with a bright sun playing at hide-and-seek among white cumulus and gray cumulus, a fresh and pleasant breeze blowing, a sparkling sea all around, and a whale in sight, what more natural than that the emigrants

should forget all about sea-sickness, and come up from below? They did, in crowds; and very happy and jolly they appeared. The laughing and joking were 'immense,' to use an ugly slang word. They seemed to fall into groups quite naturally. But the largest group—in fact it was more a mob than a group—squatting, or lay, or lounged on the weather side of the deck, close to the wooden bars that barricaded them off from the quarter-deck and the quality. Here their chief amusement was watching and criticising us, our dress, our looks, our language, and the games we played.

When some days had passed away, and *mal de mer* was as far astern as green Erin itself, what with the good living they had enjoyed, and the pure fresh air they were constantly breathing, our emigrants began to feel quite jolly and frisky. Why, it occurred to them, couldn't they get up some amusement as well as the quality—a ball, or a concert, or something? The concert was the first idea to be carried out; and a strange promiscuous kind of an entertainment it was, any one singing just as the spirit moved him, and sometimes even a girl leading with sweet contralto voice. It was soon discovered that one of their number possessed a concertina; and it was not long ere both he and his instrument were requisitioned *pro bono publico* of the emigrants. In a rough kind of a way the owner could play a jig; to which there was a deal of dancing or capering, with a lot of wild 'hooching.'

Both myself and my die-hard, I think, were somewhat respected and liked forward; for the die-hard had, a kindly glance for everybody, and I had—well, spoken not unkindly to a few.

'Yes,' I said to myself one fine

evening, 'why shouldn't I go and give them a dance? Why should my darling Cremona lie mute in its baize-lined coffin? Why should I feel shy and ashamed to give these poor creatures pleasure?'

I sent for the boy with the concertina, and told him what I was going to do, and tuned my fiddle to his instrument, and told him his part.

'Don't attempt,' I said, 'to follow me in any air I play. Only stick to the key-note, and give me a kind of bass.'

A minute or two after, we were both seated on top of the barricade.

'Clear the decks, boys,' I cried, 'and I'll give you a dance.'

The cabin passengers, wondering, but delighted, crept up behind the musicians, and the 'boys' speedily cleared the deck. I was in fine form; and with hardly a preamble I started off into one of the maddest, merriest Irish jigs that ever I learned, playing on three flats, and shifting oft, to give it that slight touch of melancholy, without which not even a jig can be thoroughly Irish. When I finished I was famous. But I didn't give them time to bother me with blarney, for

'Hornpipes, strathspeys, and jigs and
reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.'

You can imagine the scene, reader; I shall not attempt to describe that. When I thought they were a bit tired, and as my own fingers ached, I sang that charming song, 'The Wearing o' the Green.' To tell of the effect the song had on those poor emigrants would savour of egotism on my part. I was glad to rattle off again into a jig. Then I went below, having done some good, I think.

I give this little sketch to show what our Irish emigrants were at

their best on board. A rough lot, it may be admitted—in other words, the raw material from which the mighty Republic is manufactured; and 'not bad stuff either,' as a Yankee observed to me.

Let me now say a word or two about the manner of life of these emigrants on board, and about the onerous duties the purser and doctor have to perform; for these two officers must go hand in hand in the work of supervision.

I am not quite sure what time the emigrants have to get up in the morning; but I believe it is at half-past six or seven. They, at all events, have had a good 'long night in,' as sailors call it; and their sleeping-berths can hardly be considered uncomfortable—they are six feet long by three feet wide. When they turn out in the morning they have a wash, there being two apartments devoted to this purpose—one for the men, another for the women. After this they can go on deck for a little fresh air until breakfast is served. The hour for this meal is half-past seven; and it consists of bread-and-butter and hot rolls, with tea and coffee *ad libitum*—the rule being to let them have all they can eat, while nothing must be recklessly wasted.

Dinner is served at twelve o'clock. *Menu*: Soup first, and afterwards fresh boiled meat of some kind, with potatoes and bread in abundance. This meal is supplemented on Sundays by the addition of a substantial allowance of plum-pudding.

Then at five o'clock tea comes on the board; but so generous is this meal, that it might well be called supper, oatmeal porridge or gruel being a staple dish; and, in addition to this, there is tea or coffee with bread-and-butter.

Indeed, the whole dietary is on the most liberal scale.

The emigrants are got below between nine and ten ; and so ends the day.

Smoking is allowed at any time on the upper deck ; but pipes must not even be lighted 'tween decks. I hardly know what all the purser has not to do—often he has a hard enough time of it ; and he must be a light sleeper, for he may be seen taking a walk through the steerage, like an uneasy ghost, at almost any hour of the night, so that no impropriety of any kind is likely to arise. The principal part of his duty consists in seeing after the comfort of the emigrants under his charge, and that all sanitary arrangements are well and properly carried out. There is a great deal of washing and scrubbing of decks and berths goes on daily ; and with the emigrants themselves the purser must be very firm, though by no means rough. He must see that they are perfectly clean in habits and person, and that they keep themselves so ; the great object being to get them safely over to the other side of the Atlantic without the chance of illness of any kind arising. To effect this he has not only to keep them and all their surroundings sweet and clean, but he must try his best to keep them happy and in good-humour. The first two or three days, when he has to combat the physical and mental effects of sea-sickness among his people, are by far the hardest on the purser ; but if the other officers of the ship are kindly disposed towards the emigrants, and forbearing, the load lies much lighter on the purser's shoulders.

With the women, I was told by this officer, he has much more trouble than with the men. I hope I may not be accused of ungallantry if I say that the pur-

ser's experience is precisely my own. As a rule, women are bad sailors, and worse than babies at sea.

Talking about babies, we had one born during the passage. It came on board, too, on the only stormy night we had. The doctor and I had the poor woman in the hospital, which was right away for'ard on deck. The seas were hitting us hard, and tons of water coming in board over the bows and over the hospital. We had over five hundred women on board, but not one could we get to help us to do the needful by baby ; so, with the assistance of the ship's steward, we did the best we could, though during the bathing process a green sea burst open the hospital-door, and nearly washed us all away.

The emigrants require very little assistance at the hands of the doctor in the matter of medicine. Some of them looked sickly and dull enough when they came on board ; but, short though the voyage was, those same people were far less hollow about the cheeks and temples when they stepped on shore at New York. This is of course attributable to the fresh air and good living.

Happy and jolly though we all were on board, both fore and aft, nobody, I daresay, was very sorry when land was sighted at last. Next day we were alongside the custom-house, and by and by our emigrants were taken on shore.

Castle Garden, as it is called, is the temporary home of the emigrants at New York. This place was, I believe, originally an old Dutch church ; it next became a concert-hall. Here it was, indeed, that Jenny Lind made her *début* under Barnum. It has since been taken up by the emigration authorities, and all the emigrants pass through it, and have their names, ages, and so forth regis-

tered, and are afforded every opportunity of finding out the addresses of any friends of theirs who may have come out to the country before them. At Castle Garden emigrants may also stay free, until they communicate with or find their friends—rent free, I mean; for of course they have to find their own food supplies, and they are moreover bound by certain rules or restrictions framed entirely for their benefit. This is a good thing for them, for they generally have a little money; and if they once fall into the hands of New York sharpers, better for them had they stayed at home in Ireland.

But, indeed, the wish uppermost in the minds of these poor but hopeful emigrants is to get right away from New York as soon as possible. They feel that they are in a strange country, that they are thrown entirely on their own resources, and they seem to have made up their minds to work. And so they are booked right away through

by emigrant trains to Iowa, Nebraska, Nevada, or Wisconsin.

When they get there they are bound to work for a time for other farmers; but there is one thing they cannot do—they cannot spend money, and so they save it, and by and by they find they have quite enough to purchase a patch of prairie-land, and start farming on their own account. And for the first year it is the goodly custom of his neighbours to assist the newly-started farmer; so taking everything into account, the emigrants, once arrived at their new home, cannot really help doing well.

I may say in conclusion that from all I have seen and heard while in the States, this emigration scheme is one of the best things that ever happened for Ireland. But why for Ireland only? Our own Scottish farm-servants would do far better by emigrating than by staying at home to grumble.

GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

LADY BEAUTY; OR, CHARMING TO HER LATEST DAY.

Book the Third.

LADY BEAUTY'S LOVERS.

CHAPTER I.

A VERY SUPERFLUOUS CHAPTER, WITH NOTHING TO RECOMMEND IT BUT POETRY AND HUMOUR.

EVERYBODY was surprised to hear that beautiful Sibyl Temple had engaged herself to a man who, though by no means aged, was still old enough to be her father. But Archibald Goldmore was wealthy, and that explains everything. We all said that Sibyl was marrying for money. I must remark that subsequent knowledge of her led me to believe that this was a harsh judgment. Sibyl had never greatly cared for young men. Her favourite proverb—with what a curl of the lip I have seen her deliver it!—was, ‘Better be an old man’s darling than a young man’s warling.’ She foresaw, I fancy, that as the wife of an elder she would have more liberty, be more indulged and caressed; and this motive, together with a coldness of temperament which I have remarked in other great beauties beside Sibyl, led her to accept the hand of Archibald Goldmore, Esquire.

Car’s engagement astonished everybody. Clever Car Temple, Car Temple, who read everything, who knew four languages, had studied logic, and was a perfect dictionary of dates—Car Temple the wife of young Doolittle, with his lisp and his semi-idiotcy! Never, we all declared, in the whole history of matrimony, had such an absurdity been witnessed. For, in some respects, Car was the most attractive of the three. She was handsome, stylish, dressed well, and in addition to this she had good conversation and a pleasant wit. She was the sort of girl who might have been sought out by a judge or a cabinet minister who would have wanted an accomplished and intellectual woman to shine in his drawing-room.

Both these girls, we said, were throwing themselves away; and we felt sorry for it. Each was remarkable in her way. In their minds, as in Sophia’s, the lessons of the little mother had sunk deep. They too thought of living to please, and resolved to be brilliant and captivating. Car relied on her superior mind; Sibyl looked to her beauty; and each girl resolved to be, in her way and by the exercise of her own gift, a queen of society.

Valentine's-day came round. It was the custom of these sisters always to send pretty little missives to each other on this day from real or assumed admirers; so each was sure of two pretty valentines at least. How many more came on this particular day I cannot tell; but there arrived three letters, one for Caroline, one for Sibyl, and one for Sophia, addressed in the same handwriting, and looking like anything rather than valentines. Valentines, however, they turned out to be, and those which aroused most curiosity and received most attention. Two days before, the girls had been at a party, and Car had remarked laughingly in company that she was low-spirited, having that



morning discovered her first gray hair. (On the same day Archibald Goldmore and his intended had gone out for a short walk, and had been caught in the snow. These two incidents, as it appeared, had come to somebody's knowledge; for they were plainly alluded to in the lines which each girl read in her valentine. Sophia opened hers first. It was very short, and the poetry, I think, poor. Here it is:

' MISUNDERSTOOD.

I wrote and praised Sophia's mind,
So winning, gracious, and refined;
They, reading, said, "This thing of grace
Must be our sweet Sophia's face."

And next (in words) her face I drew,
But I was then mistaken too;
Because perfection I defined,
They thought I meant Sophia's mind.'

'Well,' exclaimed Sibyl, drawing a long breath, 'I hope you are satisfied. There will be nothing left for Car and me.'

'Poaching, too!' cried Car. 'I am not going to have *your* mind praised, you thing; for you have none. Now for mine!' She opened her envelope. 'Poetry again, I declare! Listen, girls: attention!'

'HER FIRST GRAY HAIR.

My own, my sweet, my heart of hearts,
Is cross, is sad, by fits and starts;
She weeps, and then she tells the truth—
She mourns the flight of rosy youth.

If you love me and I love you,
Let the same fate befall us two.
Would you be warm when I am cold?
Would you keep young while I grow old?

When Time those tender cheeks shall wrinkle,
When silver hairs the chestnut sprinkle,
You shall be wrinkled less than me,
For your one gray hair I'll show three.

And when old age has really come,
We'll sit together, snug at home,
Two cronies old, with pleasing pain
Fighting Love's battle o'er again.

Till "See!" we'll say, "the night is falling;"
And "Hark, a heavenly voice is calling!"
We'll fly to worlds by prophets sung:
Be always loving, always young.'

'Now,' exclaimed Car, 'this *must* be from some one that heard me the other day. It isn't Egerton; it isn't bad enough for him.'

'No,' Sibyl remarked gravely; 'it is not bad enough for Egerton. I think it rather pretty.'

'Let's have yours, then,' Car cried; 'they all come from the same person.' So Sibyl read her valentine, and all the three were grave now with curiosity and interest.

'LOVE AND SNOW.

O, once upon a wintry day,
Myself and Dear went out to play,
When, floating from the cold gray sky,
Stole many a silent snow-flake by.

My heart was burning, hers was cold,
Though she was young and I was old;
To touch her chilly hand I strove:
"Beloved," I said, "who wilt not love,

Your heart, I vow, is fixed and chill,
Like those gray skies so dead and still;
O, for an hour of summer glow
In skies, in hearts, as cold as snow!

This flake," cried I, "which falls to-day
Upon your frozen breast I lay;
Now if it melt, I'll hope to see
Your kindling bosom melt for me."

In vain I watched, entranced, intent;
The snow-flake neither stayed nor went;
For which was flesh and which was snow,
There was never an eye on earth could know.'

'Upon my word!' exclaimed Car. 'Is that your way, Sibyl, making love in a snow-shower?'

'Going out for an afternoon winter walk in a low-necked dress!' added Sophia.

'Never mind,' Sibyl retorted. 'I like my snow-flake better than your gray hair. What do you think, Sophy?'

'O, Sophy is so on the stilts about her mind—"so winning, gracious, and refined"—that she won't speak to you and me,' Car said, stroking Sophia's hand, however.

At this point Mrs. Barbara Temple entered.

'Well, girls,' said she, 'how many valentines?'

Instantly the prettiest wit-battle began.

'One, mamma, for a lady with a face so like a mind that you can't tell which is which.' And Car pointed a finger at Sophia.

'One for a lady with an admirer and a gray hair!' And Sibyl dipped a curtsy at Car.

'One for a lady with shivering shoulders!' And Sophia sent the rosy tip of her tongue—only the tip of the tip—darting out between her teeth at Sibyl.

In such rapid sentences the girls thrust at each other, and little Mrs. Temple looked on with great admiration.

'Very charming vivacity, dears. I wish somebody beside your stupid old mother were here to see. But you are like all spoilt children: you behave best when nobody is by.'

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH THE LOVER SAYS 'WILL YOU?' AND THE LADY SAYS 'YES.'

THAT evening Rector Brent appeared about five o'clock, just as the lamps were lighted in the drawing-room. Luck had it this time that Sophia should be sitting alone; and as she rose to welcome her visitors, she remarked that her mother and Sibyl were in the library and Car out for a walk. The little man, with praiseworthy readiness—perhaps he had got a hint beforehand—remarked that he would go to the library, as he wanted to speak with Mrs. Temple; and at the word he hurried from the room, and left our pair alone. Sophia, glancing at Algernon, noticed that he carried a small parcel in his hand; and he, finding him-

self alone with her, resolved to finish his broken story. He lost no time now, having learned a lesson on that subject already.

'I was interrupted the other day when I was telling you about Australia,' he remarked, drawing a chair close beside her. 'Shall I finish what I was saying?'

'Do.'

'That girl I am in love with so passionately, who got my heart out there—' all this came out with such tumultuous haste that she might have known what would follow—'shall I show you her portrait?'

'I should like to see it.'

'I thought you would. I brought it with me,' he said, opening his packet with trembling fingers. 'Only let me tell you this picture gives you a very faint idea of her indeed. It is beautiful, but her actual face is past all likeness and all praise, soft as starlight, pure as snow, tender as the spring sunshine, full of life and truth. O, how I love it!'

'She must be happy,' Sophia said, with a delicate sadness that whispered all he wanted to know, but the excited young fellow did not mark it. 'She must be very happy. Let me look at the picture.'

Almost with a sob she said it.

'I shall show it in a moment,' he replied, holding it ready to turn up to the lamplight; 'only let me finish my story first. It was this picture I fell in love with. I resolved when I saw the face that is here to live and die for it. Its heavenly fairness subdued me in a moment and for ever, and all my fear was lest the true face should not be as lovely. I had to wait a long time before I saw the original, many months. All that time I was true to my picture, and gazed at it morning, noon, and night, till every feature was printed on my heart. Then the day came when I saw—*her*. At the sight all memory of the picture vanished quite away. O, how I trembled lest she should be promised to another, or lest she should not love me!'

'Was she promised to another?'

'No.'

There followed a tiny sigh.

'And did she—did she— O, but she must!' Sophia said, turning her sad full eyes on his manly face. 'I can finish the story: she said she would love you.'

'The story is not finished yet,' he cried impetuously. 'But you are right in one thing: you can finish it. Look, this is the picture of the girl I love.'

She bent to look, and as she did so a tear she could not keep back dropped on the cardboard. The next instant she uttered a cry and started to her feet. She had seen herself.

A moment she looked at him, and such was the struggle of surprise, delight, modesty, and fear in her face that he was now as far from her secret as a moment before she had been from his. He thought she was angry.

'Miss Temple—Sophia,' he said, 'don't be angry. 'If I have offended you, I did not mean it. Surely you won't be angry?'

Still she made no answer, but only looked at him, for speech and action had forsaken her together; and he, foolish fellow, grew certain that she was displeased.

'I loved it so,' he said, pleading. 'I could not help it; and I wanted to tell you myself before I spoke to others about it. I wanted you to hear the story first from my own lips.' He hung his head, ashamed to look at her. 'I know I am presumptuous. I feel sure already that you will tell me I am not the man you can love. I wish I had waited a little before speaking; the dream was so much better than this awakening; but I could keep myself silent no longer. Perhaps it is as well to know it at once. It will save—'

But as he spoke, her cheek came close to his own, and her little hand fell on his shoulder. Too womanly for coquetry or coyness, she gave her answer at once, and with such readiness that neither Percival nor Sophia were able to settle that night which kissed the other first.

Just as the girls were going to bed, Car took up the portrait of Sophia, which he had left behind in his rapture. They passed it from hand to hand. It was like. It was not. It flattered. It did not. But as they judged it, Car, turning it over, saw written in pencil on the back the eight lines of Sophia's valentine.

'A discovery!' she cried, with a little whistle: she affected that manly accomplishment. 'Sophy, your Percival is the valentine man. Well, I like him for it. The poetry is not wonderful; but still it was kind of him to think of *us* on the same day he wrote to you.'

'He writes poetry!' exclaimed Sibyl. 'I should not have thought it. He looks more like dictionary, Latin prose, historical essay, botanical catalogue.'

'My dear, my dear,' said little Mrs. Temple, who was looking over Sybil's shoulder, 'when will you understand what I have told you a hundred times? These bookish men can beat your men of fashion when they try, love—when they really try. I shall make something of that young man, I promise it.'

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH CAROLINE AND SIBYL ARE TO BE SEEN ENTERING THE MARRIED STATE
THROUGH GOLDEN GATES.

AND so the third Miss Temple was engaged. Mamma made no objection. She did, indeed, when business came to be talked, remark to Mr. Brent that her daughter's fortune would not be large, and that she hoped he would be able to provide handsomely for his son. At this he waved his hand in a confident way, nodded, and said, 'That shall be all right.' He did not at that time enter into any particulars; but Mrs. Temple, from what she knew of him, was quite satisfied with this assurance, and the matter dropped.

It was soon known to the whole town that Sophia Temple was engaged to Percival Brent, and the announcement a little relieved our disappointment at the mysterious disappearance of the Rector's flirtation with the widow. Indeed, some of us started the hypothesis that what we superficial investigators had mistaken for a flirtation was in reality nothing more than the settling of the preliminaries of the present affair. We said it must have been very pleasant for the two seniors to make the arrangements in that snug way; and thus we explained the little intimacy between them.

Pleasant was the early courtship of this happy pair. The very skies smiled on it. Never, I believe, was there such a February. Day followed day in the softest beauty. Mornings crisp with frost, soft balmy noons, evenings with red skies and frosty air again. Their love-making was full of satisfaction. Sophia found him an ingenuous young fellow, with real enthusiasm, full of active resolutions for life. True, she found it hard to be very warm over geology; but his general notion of living to use and honour delighted her. I think she would have been better pleased had he talked of getting into Parliament or entering the Church, rather than of achieving triumphs at the British Association, an institution which at that time had not emerged from the age of weakness and scorn. Still, she was fully satisfied with him, and gave him all her love. And he, for his part,—it could not be otherwise—was entranced with her. Warmth, purity, tenderness, principle, all the finer parts of character were hers; taste, and no lack of humour, ready speech, lively fancy. As to her face, he worshipped it. He always said—mindful of his valentine—that her face was beautiful because it was the image of her mind. Why narrate lovers' raptures? They were all in all to each other these happy days of early spring.

In March the two weddings came off: first Car's, and then Sibyl's. Egerton Doolittle had made a special request that the

two should be celebrated on the same day ; but to his request the great Goldmore declined to comply—possibly a lurking suspicion that the thing might look ludicrous led him to say no. Accordingly, we married Caroline and Egerton first ; and a pleasant wedding it was, everything being done in most elegant style ; and little Mrs. Barbara Temple looked not a day more than forty. And Rector Brent, between the occasion, the champagne, and his own amorous disposition, cast so many glances at her, and these so warm, that it seemed as if he was being captivated anew. Car, I must say, looked splendid that morning ; flashing with wit, fire in her eyes, and her attire faultless. She wore a bridal dress of brocaded satin, and her head-dress, which was somewhat original—those girls had a tasteful way of being slightly out of the common—pleased all the ladies ! the men, I believe, looked more at the head which carried it. Her veil, streaming over her superb shoulders, made her dress complete ; and we all pronounced her a lovely bride. She went through the service without any nervousness ; indeed, I thought with slight audacity, as if she would challenge any one to say she had made a foolish choice. Egerton Doolittle lisped his responses ; and the two were man and wife together. Breakfast, as I said, went off well. Little Mr. Brent proposed bride and bridegroom, to which, with many a blush and titter and hand sidled to his mouth, Egerton responded. He thanked them all. He believed that he *was* a very fortunate man. Here came a long pause. Fact was—confidentially—it had been his great aim in life to find a tremendously clever woman—a woman who would be able to point out whether any given work was erroneous or not. He did not like erroneous works. He might read an erroneous work without knowing it, and get his mind upset. He had married a wife who could and would tell him if a given work was erroneous, and he was very happy. He thanked everybody, and wished everybody in the room would soon be married like himself, except those who were married already. There was no need to wish *them* married, because—with a sly expression—they were married already. (Here champagne effects became slightly prominent.) He believed he had married a tremendously clever girl—woman he meant—wife he meant—and he was very thankful. He hoped his wife would try to make him happy—he meant he hoped he would try to make her happy—no, he meant that he *would* try to make her happy, and he hoped he would do it. Man was strong. Woman was weak. The man should use his strength to make the woman comfortable and happy, you know. As the poet had said, it was tyrannous to have a giant's strength, but it was excellent to—no, that was not it exactly. He forgot which came first. He would look it up, and send them the exact quotation by

post. Anyhow, whatever the poet had said, if it was a manly act, he pledged himself to do it, but not otherwise, and he believed that was the safest way to leave it. Here he sat down with a kind of movement as if he were going to pieces, and we all applauded heartily.

Sibyl's wedding came a fortnight later, more sedate, and even more splendid. Archibald Goldmore loaded his young bride with presents so costly, that I think, to have had them, some of the girls would have married Methuselah. Goldmore looked dignified enough during the service, and not old; and he walked down the aisle with a vigorous tread, so that, on the whole, the disparity in years did not appear so great as we expected.

Sophia had been chief bridesmaid, of course; and, in spite of



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her sister's faultless beauty, in my eyes she looked the lovelier of the two. While they were kneeling, a sunbeam fell on her, and when it touched her head, heaven seemed choosing her as a bride at the same moment. Wonderful it was how the posture of prayer became that girl—the warmth and seriousness of her face seemed framed for worship, or for pure exalted love. But are the two sentiments alien?

No blunder about Goldmore's speech, you may be sure. All sober, proper, truly elephantine, and thoroughly Great British. The language in which his reverend friend had proposed the health of himself and his wife was in the highest sense gratifying. On his wife's part and his own he thanked them sincerely. He felt, indeed, that the lady who had that morning bestowed her hand upon him was all, and more than all, that his reverend friend had called her. He felt the honour she had conferred

upon him. He could assure his wife, and her friends, that whatever lay in his power should be done to make her the return which she deserved. It was a satisfaction to them both to know that marriage would not part them from their friends, nor from that locality. It would not be long before they should be among them as neighbours; and he could only say, as one of the pleasantest incidents in that propinquity, that his wife and himself looked forward to seeing the present company gathered round their own table.



One thing was noticed at the wedding feast: little Mr. Brent usually the loudest laughter in every company, appeared grave and abstracted; indeed, more than one person remarked a strange pallor about him which suggested a suspicion that he was struck with illness. Percival, happy with his Sophia, and with a thousand tender thoughts, awakened by the ceremony of the day, stirring in his breast, was not likely to observe anything except what enforced attention; and no cloud dimmed the brightness of the lover's joy. Had Percival noticed his father's face he—used to its expressions—would have perceived that it was not illness which was impending. But Fate was kind to these loving two. It was for them a day of tender and undimmed delight—not a cloud, not a breath, not a doubt—only playful raillery, soft looks,

gentle touches, sighs, and all the train of lovers' little pleasures. Their love increased wonderfully that happy day; and it was well, for trouble was at hand.

CHAPTER IV.

ABOUT MISFORTUNE. WITH A SHINING EXAMPLE OF THE BRAVE WAY IN WHICH
WORLDLY PEOPLE ENDURE THE AFFLICTIONS OF THEIR NEIGHBOURS.

It was dark as father and son drove home, and Percival was greatly startled when, almost as soon as the horses began to move, the Rector threw himself upon him, and, sobbing like a child, called out,

'I am a ruined man, Percy—a ruined man!'

The explanation which followed this announcement was in all its main features new to Percival, who had never known any particulars of his father's affairs. The facts, which may be briefly told, were these: Brent senior was the son of a father who had married twice, and the Rector had now a half-brother nearly twenty years older than himself. This brother, under his mother's marriage settlement, had inherited all her property, which was very large. The father had a life interest in it, but at his death the whole passed absolutely to her only child. Rector Brent's father had ever been a careless and imprudent man, who, having married fortunately, lived on his wife's money. After her death he married again, as has been said, and his second wife died in the same month as himself; but his reckless and improvident character was plainly seen by the state in which his affairs were left. He might easily have saved, and saved handsomely, for the education and maintenance of his second son, our rector, but as a matter of fact he died so deeply in debt that even his furniture had to be sold to satisfy his creditors. Young Brent was then at Oxford preparing for the Church, but it seemed as if his whole future must be altered. At this time his brother came forward, and although he had never been kindly used by the second Mrs. Brent, he now, with great generosity, resolved to help his brother; and he made him an ample allowance for his University expenses. Under these circumstances a very cordial friendship sprang up between the two, and this friendship had hitherto been unbroken. The elder brother did not marry, being studious; and if not a woman hater, certainly not a woman hunter. As time went on, and the younger brother's position and requirements grew, the elder increased the allowance he made him, and now for several years he had been giving the Rector fifteen hundred per annum. This he promised should be continued to his death, when an ample provision would be made for himself and his son. This arrangement had gone on:

for many years undisturbed, but a short time before, to Rector Brent's great uneasiness, his brother, then over seventy, told him he meditated marriage. The facts were soon out. A strong-minded Irish widow, of good family, with a file of tall hungry penniless sons, had marked him for her own. There followed, in the usual artful sequel, flattery and amiable persecution. The old man was cajoled, managed, and, in the last stages of the affair, bullied, until, without his brother's knowledge, he was actually married to the triumphant widow, who wrote to the Rector, explaining the haste and secrecy of the transaction by the state of 'our dear Henry's nervous system.' The elder brother assured his junior that the marriage would make no difference in his allowance or his subsequent prospects; and for twelve months this promise was kept. But the old man was growing feeble, and his wife impatient. Her sons were expensive, and she wished to secure everything for them. By what means could not be ascertained, but she spirited her husband away to the South of France. Under the plea of bronchial disease and nervous prostration, she shut him up from society; and when, a few months before, the Rector, growing uneasy, had gone to Cannes to see his brother, he was not admitted to the house, being comforted by the assurance that everything was being done to restore, or at least to compose, 'dear Henry's nervous system.' To tell the rest in a few words, on the morning of Sibyl's marriage the poor Rector received a letter, written by his brother himself, in which, after some few vague sentences about 'loss of money,' 'failure of investments,' and 'increasing expenses,' he plainly said that he enclosed the last cheque which he would ever be able to send. The letter closed with a postscript, in which the Rector was reminded that already a great deal had been done for him, which genial stroke was due to the dictation of the accomplished Mrs. Brent. So our unhappy Rector found himself placed in the position of the holder of a benefice worth scarcely a hundred a year, after outgoings, a costly establishment, luxurious habits, declining years, and a son who had been led to expect fortune as his inheritance.

The little clergyman behaved with singular dignity and straightforwardness. He told the whole story frankly, and seemed to develop fortitude for the trial. We were pleased to hear now from his lips some of those phrases about trust in God and resignation to the dispositions of Providence at which we had sometimes felt inclined to smile when the sleek little fellow spoke them in the pulpit. Indeed, so deep was our commiseration for the Rector's misfortune that we—who are neither a churchy nor, I fear, a very charitable people—summoned a meeting of leading parishioners, at which we resolved, by annual subscription, to

raise enough to pay the curates; and thus, without directly pauperising our clergyman, we hoped to enable him to hold his living. In this way Rector Brent was put in possession of about three hundred a year—not a bad allowance, you may say; but consider how he had lived hitherto. The carriage must be put down; the gardens must be laid out in grass; the cosy dinner-parties must be given up; Rector Brent must, for the rest of his life, walk the ways of genteel poverty.

Among the first to hear the bad news was Mrs. Barbara Temple. That excellent little woman had a maxim for every change and chance; and upon hearing the tidings, she remarked that such was the world—up and down. ‘If the “ups” were always up,’ she continued, straying for an instant into philosophy, ‘the downs would never have a chance. There was only so much money, so much ease, so much luck, going. What one lost fell to the lot of another.’ At the same time, she expressed and felt genuine sorrow for Mr. Brent and for his son, who had always appeared to her a most promising young fellow.

Shortly after hearing all this, Mrs. Temple rang for her maid, and sent for Sophia, who came in with a light dancing step, rare with her; her face was full of glee.

‘I know what it is, mamma; you want me to look at your dress. But I saw it before you did. Frightful it is! You sha’n’t wear it, dear; not if I wear it myself.’

‘Sophia, you look very pretty this morning,’ the mother said, with much fondness and admiration, and a touch of sorrow too, as she thought of the disappointment the girl was about to have. ‘Never mind the gown; I have something to say to you.’

Sophia looked wondering into her mother’s serious face, as she took a seat beside her.

‘Life is full of trials, Sophy,’ the kind-hearted little worldling began. ‘No one is fit to live who is not ready to meet small vexations and disappointments, that perhaps at first don’t seem small, and meet them with a cheerful face. One great thing is to remember—what is undoubtedly true—that most disappointments have a bright as well as a dark side. Indeed, if one looks over one’s life, it is surprising to notice how many mishaps which we either cried over or felt we would like to cry over, only we restrained ourselves, become on review matters of congratulation. Do you know, Sophy, I think sometimes, when I look back over my life, that what I called my misfortunes have in three cases out of four become either directly or indirectly sources of happiness after a year or two. I don’t wish to talk boastfully, dear; but I think some of that is due to my own good common sense.’

She drew herself up, with a self-satisfied air, but instantly

resumed her compassionate tone; while Sophia looked a little anxious, not knowing what was coming. She saw that her mother watched her closely, as she delivered herself of these philosophic morsels.

'I shall not delay what I have to say,' Mrs. Temple went on, stroking her girl's hand kindly. 'I have heard something this morning which renders your marriage with young Brent impossible.'

'Mamma!' Sophia cried, in great agitation.

'These things happen, Sophy,' the mother continued; 'these things often happen. I never told any of you girls before, but I assure you the first man that proposed to me—and to whom I was on the point of being married—had to fly from England to avoid transportation.'

'Mamma!' Sophia cried again, but now springing to her feet, with a face white with fear and pain. 'Tell me; what is it? He can't, O, he *can't* have done anything wrong!'

'Nothing wrong, dear,' she answered. 'I only mentioned my case as in some respects like yours. No; the Brents are honourable people, but they are beggars this morning, Sophy—beggars.'

Then, in as few words as she could use, the little woman, with most perfect lucidity, told the story of the disaster, remarking when she came to the manœuvring widow that the Rector ought to have kept a sharper eye on his brother.

'Because we all know, Sophy, that there are always widows who will do these things if they can. I should as soon think of leaving my jewel-box all night open on my front doorstep as of leaving a rich relation unguarded—if it was my policy to get his money. Now, don't cry, dear,' she added, seeing her girl's tears flowing fast: 'things might have been much worse.'

'I am not crying now, mamma,' Sophia said, sobbing, however, while she spoke. 'I was frightened at first by what you said. At least, these are tears of relief, I mean. I really felt afraid of I don't know what. But it is only money Percival has lost—not character, not honour.'

'O, no; his honour is untouched,' the mother replied. 'His character is as good as ever; and that will, of course, stand by him when he goes in search of employment. Besides, I am glad on your account, dear; for even the most transient connection of your name with a person who had done anything wrong would be disagreeable.'

Sophia said nothing. She was drying off her tears with great briskness and assiduity. It is a pleasant sight to see a pretty young woman wiping her tears away, and feathering herself into cheerfulness again.

'Excellent good sense, Sophia,' the mother said, looking at her with great approval. 'I always knew, with your sound judgment, you would come to this view of the matter; but I was prepared for a little temporary reluctance and a little girlish romance, and I was prepared to bear it kindly, dear, and to wait for the return of good sense, which I knew would not be delayed long. But you are a wise girl, Sophy; nothing like facing the inevitable boldly, and at once.'

'But, mamma,' Sophia said, 'it is not such a great trial. Percival can work. We both can wait.'

'O, then I have mistaken you!' exclaimed the mother. 'Now, Sophy, my dear, you must not be absurd. This marriage is simply impossible. Wait as long as you may, the young man cannot make a fortune such as you should expect and require. You will see this some day.'

'I promised him I would love him always,' Sophia said, with artlessness which in another woman might have seemed affected; 'and am I to break my word because my poor fellow is unfortunate? He has done nothing. Is he to lose his money and—and me too?'

At which dreadful prospect Sophia began to cry again, and worked at her eyes with her pocket-handkerchief, which she had twisted into a sort of ball, as crying women do.

'It is a very nice kind way of talking, Sophy,' the little diplomatist said; 'and it does you credit, dear. I almost think I like you better for it, sweet, sweet girl!' with a kiss at each adjective. 'But we must be prudent, dear. Believe me, Sophy, nothing that is imprudent is ever kind in the long run. It may appear so; it never is—not kind even to those it seems most to benefit. In life, dear, everything depends on prudence.'

'Mamma,' Sophia cried, rising from her chair for the second time, 'if you had told me that Percival had been disgraced, I think I should have died. If you had told me that the man who spoke to me as he spoke had any secret dishonour, I think I should have killed myself in grief and shame. I know the world would never have been the same to me again. But his fortune, his money—what is that? Mamma, I promised to love him and to marry him, and nothing but his own fault shall make me change. Not if he lost ten fortunes! It would be hard on him,' she repeated, with another rub of her eyes, 'to lose his money, and then to lose me.'

Mother and daughter, there they sat. The mother was not angry, scarcely disappointed, quiet, confident, fully assured that the victory would be on her side at last. Were not time and money with her, and who with such auxiliaries ever lost a battle? And there sat the daughter, tearful, flushed, affectionate, longing to

have her Percival beside her to console him. Ah, sweet Sophia Temple, some there were as well as Percival who for a few of those tender dewy kisses then budding on thy lips would have lost half the world, and scarcely sighed as it slipped away!

CHAPTER V.

STILL ABOUT MISFORTUNE. BUT CONTAINING NOW AN EXAMPLE OF THE WAY IN WHICH UNWORLDLY PEOPLE BEAR THEIR OWN AFFLICTIONS.

PERCIVAL called upon Sophia that afternoon, and, for some wise reason, Mrs. Barbara Temple allowed him to see her alone. Indeed, the little woman was never other than kind to her daughters; and, being sure that Sophia's madness could not last, she resolved not to seem tyrannical. So she let the boy and girl have it all to themselves.

Percival, impulsive in his wretchedness, told Sophia everything in a breath. He was stout-hearted enough to hide his grief pretty well; and he hastily assumed, as a kind of postulate of the whole conversation, that Sophia would think of nothing but of giving him up. Thus he raised in her a light sweet petulance, which caused her to leave his dark illusion unscattered for a while.

'I shall go out to Australia again, and begin life,' he said with a manful air.

She could not look at him, or she would have been in his arms, so she stood half turned from him with downcast eyes, and he, watching her, felt his heart sink. He had faintly hoped for other things.

'Yes, I shall go out to Australia again,' he repeated, so sadly that Sophia could hardly even for an instant hold herself back. 'It is a fine climate,' he added, trying to seem unconcerned again.

'You will meet some girl out there,' she answered in the very exultation of her hypocrisy, 'and you will like her very well.'

'I shall never love any one again,' he said gravely; and his voice grew unsteady at the last word. 'Only you,' he added, in a yet more shaking voice. That bit of unsteadiness finished Sophia off.

'Never do!' she cried—'never do! I ask nothing more of you; and then go round and round the world, and I shall wait here faithfully till you come back!'

So her little bit of deceit was over, and she was sobbing in his arms, telling him that he was ten thousand times dearer to her now, because she could show her love to him; and that no other man should ever call her his own, with twenty other of those silly speeches made on such occasions; some of which, as declaring

the nobler impulses of the heart that God has made, will be remembered, I doubt not, when ten thousand human frailties are blotted out of the book of his remembrance. And Percival, holding the lovely girl in his arms, felt how little he had lost, and how much he had gained in that very loss; and he realised something of the truth of Him who knew the human heart, and said that there are times when, in the very loss of life, we find life anew—life which cannot perish and cannot be defiled.

There! They spoke no more, not another sentence, for many



minutes, but stood folded in each other's arms, mingling tears, enraptured, exchanging by a thousand fond pressures, heart against heart, emotions, vows, protestations, which the narrow channels of speech can never convey.

'You are all the world to me,' he said at last.

'All the world, am I?' she answered softly. 'O Percy, Percy!'

'And you will go on loving me, Sophia?'

'For ever and ever.'

'Better or worse—richer or poorer?'

'Yes, till death us do part; nothing else shall—never, Percy!'

So it went on, silence and speech alternating for full an hour.

Mrs. Barbara Temple was a wise woman; but I somewhat doubt the astuteness of her policy on that particular afternoon.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH 'GOOD-BYE, SWEETHEART, GOOD-BYE,' IS SET TO VERY MOURNFUL MUSIC INDEED.

THE two married sisters returned from their honeymoons about the same time, Sibyl looking haughty and discontented, but Caroline cheerful and well pleased. As to the bridegrooms, we could see no trace of change for better or worse in Goldmore; but Egerton was decidedly stouter, in excellent spirits, and, from an accession of confidence, more apt to make a fool of himself in company than ever.

The sisters soon met, and Sophia could not complain of any lack of sympathy on the part of her elders. They were both at first inclined to take prudent mamma's view; but when Sophia told them of her love and his constancy they were touched. The world had not yet got complete mastery over them, and they commended Sophia, kissed her, comforted her, and said some day she would be happy.

Commander-in-chief Mrs. Barbara Temple took care to have an interview with young Brent. She was kind and sympathetic, but she said it was her maternal duty to point out to him that—whatever Sophia might say—he was injuring her prospects if he kept up any understanding with her. 'Engagement, of course,' the little woman said, 'is not to be thought of. But even an arrangement—a promise that each will secretly wait for each—would be a pernicious snare, full of danger to Sophia's prospects.'

'Not,' added Mrs. Worldly Wisewoman, 'that these promises are *ever* kept. Facts are too much even for lovers. I have seen fifty of these understandings made in perfect good faith, and from motives that were quite pretty, but none ever came to anything. Still, I object to arrangements.'

'Your daughter is as free as if she never saw me,' Percival said. 'I have made her promise that she will consider that there is not a shred to bind her to me. She is to feel that she may engage herself and marry, and never think that there is any intimation to be sent to me, except through the newspaper.'

'And may I ask—don't think me rude, Mr. Brent; I am simply doing my duty—if *you* are as free on your side? If you marry, shall she hear of it through the newspaper too?'

She looked at him sharply, almost humorously, as she put this penetrating question. O, we must pay a tribute to our little mother who had a tact that in wider fields of action might have smoothed the feelings of ruffled empires.

'Yes, I am quite as free as she,' he answered. 'We promised each other that we should feel so.'

It was quite true. They had promised exactly in these

terms, only the four lips that exchanged the treaty were immediately afterwards engaged together sealing quite another sort of bond. Was this what Shakespeare meant by 'plain and holy innocence,' I wonder? And yet possibly Mrs. Barbara Temple guessed the true state of the case, but she was satisfied. There being no engagement, she felt sure that time, fickleness, and her great ally, this present world, would do all she wanted.

'I regret what has happened,' she said gracefully; 'and I regret it not alone on your account, but on my own. I should have been pleased with the connection. I hope you will prosper and be happy, for I am sure you deserve it.'

Egerton Doolittle, having, after careful intellectual filtration, so to speak, got the facts of the Brents' case fairly deposited in his mind, expressed great commiseration for the two poor men, as he called them. He told Car that 'we ought all to give our minds to the thing,' and see what can be done. And after a long period of cogitation, he informed his wife that he had hit on a plan which would restore the fortunes of the Brents, and—of this he made a great point—without their undertaking anything that could not be done 'with clean hands.'

'A gentleman under no circumstances should soil his hands,' Egerton said; 'and the great merit of what I propose is, that it can be done with clean hands.'

Car at first thought that this implied that the pursuit Egerton had in his mind was one morally defensible, or not felonious; but it appeared that he referred only to aristocratic notions and traditions.

'My plan is this,' Egerton said, after three-quarters of an hour of preamble which had nearly fidgeted his wife into a fit. 'I hear there is a new Joint-Stock Opera Company going to be started. Let them take shares in that. It will be a gentlemanly musical kind of thing, and the great point is it can be done with clean hands.'

Caroline not being able to see the practical value of this suggestion, Egerton resolved to open his scheme to his great brother-in-law, Goldmore. That elephantine millionaire was forced, for courtesy's sake, to listen while Doolittle, in a speech of extraordinary length and maddening circumlocution, brought out his preface; but, vexed as he was, he could not restrain his laughter when the young man wound up with the recommendation that Brent senior and junior should take shares in the forthcoming Italian Opera Joint-Stock Company.

'My great point is, Goldmore,' said Egerton, 'that it is a gentlemanly musical sort of thing, and one that can be carried on with clean hands. I think a gentleman should never soil his hands, Goldmore, don't you?'

'The difficulty is,' replied the great man, overlooking this question, 'where are the poor men to get money to buy their shares?'

'Get what?' Egerton asked.

'Money to buy their shares,' repeated Goldmore. 'Shares are not given away; you have to pay for them in hard cash. Now in the present case the difficulty is that there is no cash at all.'

'Then I suppose you don't approve of my scheme?' answered Egerton, with some irritation. 'Very well. One can only suggest. I withdraw the proposition. Still, I repeat, Goldmore, it is not every day of the week you can find a gentlemanly musical undertaking that can be carried out with clean hands.'

So he took his leave. But his visit had some result, after all; for that afternoon Archibald Goldmore called upon young Brent, and asked for a little private conversation with him. Goldmore was very kind, inquired what his young friend was going to do, nodded his head approvingly over the details of the Australian scheme, and marked the young fellow out as a man that would rise.

'Let me say one thing to you, Mr. Brent,' he said, as he rose to go. 'I am in most respects a self-made man. I know the difficulties which even industrious and clever young fellows have to face who start without capital. Now, from what my wife tells me, you have gained the affections of my sister-in-law; and I may add that from what I have seen of you, I am not surprised at it. As a member of the family, I take an interest in all that concerns them. Now, Brent, if a few hundreds will help to start you, I can lend you the sum, and I shall require no security but your word. 'You shall pay me'—this he added pleasantly—'when you are half as rich as I am.'

Brent coloured very red with gratitude and pleasure; but for all that, his reply was not what the great man expected.

'I don't know how to thank you,' he said; 'it is so kind an offer. But I have already saved enough to start me. I had a liberal allowance, and never spent it all.'

'A few hundreds extra will better your chance,' remarked the other.

'Thank you a thousand times,' the young fellow replied; 'but if I can accomplish what I wish out of my own resources, I had rather do it. If I ever marry Miss Temple, I should like to feel that it was my own doing from first to last.'

Goldmore looked at him with admiration.

'I respect the feeling, Mr. Brent,' he said. 'Only remember this: if your capital should run short, write to me, and you will find me no bad banker when the account has to be overdrawn.'

'Thank you again,' the young fellow answered. 'And that offer I do accept. You understand me, don't you? If I can manage without any man's help, I should be glad; but rather than fail, I should most gratefully avail myself of yours. I hope you don't think me proud to the point of silliness.'

'Confound it,' cried Goldmore, 'I wish you were my son!'

And the great man marched away down the street as like the Tower of Babel as ever, only in a silk hat and other human fittings. But Goldmore is on the right side of things for all his pomp and seeming hardness.

Little Mrs. Barbara Temple showed a singular mixture of astuteness and good feeling in her management of the affair from this time until Percival's departure. She took care to impress on the lover the fact that all engagement, understanding, hope, and whatever else could bind himself and Sophia together, was utterly at an end. She repeated several times that her duty as Sophia's mother was to see that her future was not embarrassed by foolish obligations hastily taken up, and perhaps retained from a sense of honour when inclination would cast them off. She told Brent that in all human probability Sophia would marry some one else in twelve months. Thus she put herself in the position of being able, with perfect honesty, to assure Sophia at any future day that Percival Brent neither did nor could expect her to wait for him. And having thus made her position good, with rare moderation, or rather far-sightedness, she did not prevent the young couple meeting occasionally, during the few weeks that intervened between the breaking of the engagement and Brent's departure for Australia.

Mrs. Barbara Temple went yet farther in the way of good-natured concession. On the day when Brent came to take his final leave, she contrived to be out of the way, sending an apology by Sophia for her absence. It was a courageous act, but worldly-wise, I presume, like all she did. I believe to the day of her mother's death, Sophia never forgot this particular concession. It showed such trust in her daughter, such kind desire not to deprive her of any secret comfort which the parting might give. In fact, it was an act of womanly generosity and courage of which few mothers would have been capable. But have I not said already that our little mother was as truly queen of women as Agamemnon was king of men?

Sophia tried to be cheerful that dull May afternoon; for she saw that her poor fellow's heart was breaking. Indeed, he could hardly speak one word. She had to tell him of a magnificent present which she had made to him in secret, and which was now waiting for him in London. This was a set of foreign travelling-boxes, furnished with everything the good little creature could

think of as being possibly of use to her dear when he was far away. I wish I could give a catalogue of the articles in leather, glass, steel, silver; how she had slipped into one part a Bible and Prayer-book; the little medicine-chest, with a book, under the guidance of which you could heal yourself of any disease; down to needles and thread—'stout thread for buttons'—her account of it read like a shopman's catalogue. She grew so interested in her cleverness and forethought that she half forgot the impending parting. Bless the heart of woman, how it lives in the present, and will not realise the future, be it ever so near! Then, blushing, she told him of one particular little pocket in one particular little leather case, which he was never to open unless he happened to want money very badly. He might have lost everything, and not be able to get back to England. In that case let him open that pocket. He might be very ill, and have nothing to pay the doctor. In that case let him open the pocket. In any capital and inextricable difficulty let him open that pocket. Poor Sophia! the savings of thrifty years, and the better part of her allowance for I don't know how many more (mortgaged to Car and Sibyl), had gone into those boxes and that pocket.

All this time, while she chatted on, trying desperately to be cheerful, he had said little or nothing. At last he took out his watch, and looked at it, gathering strength.

'I must go now,' he said.

Then in an instant, like a frail hut swept away by a sudden hurricane, all her little cheerfulness was gone. Her steadiness, her heroism were worth nothing at all. She cast herself on his breast—he was to sustain her now—crying, caressing him, clinging to him, as if she could not let him go.

'Percy,' was all she said—'darling Percy!'

And he said nothing. One thing his manliness enabled him to do: he kept silence. But not a word could he utter.

'It is the sea between us,' she said sobbing. 'Such a distance of sea! such a length of time!'

He only clasped her to his breast.

'But I shall not forget you: you won't forget me; promise it!'

No sound came from his lips; but somehow she understood by his clasp that, with an unuttered vow, he was binding himself to her for ever.

'Promise me again,' she murmured.

Still he did not make any audible reply.

'Promise me once more,' she whispered; and still without any speech, she was satisfied that he replied.

There followed a moment of silence, she offering up a prayer for his safety; and in what shrine so fit could she offer it as there

on his manly breast? Then she felt his arms gathering round her in an embrace stronger, it seemed, than death. It was as if a giant clasped her: she was like a willow wand, and his were arms of steel. Could such an embrace ever be unloosed? Yes; in a moment she was standing alone on the floor, he was passing out of the room, she cast herself helplessly on the sofa—and they were parted now.

All the time he had never spoken. But the silence of his farewell was more to her than any language could have been. He could not speak for grief. The intensity of his vow was beyond all language. Sophia often looked back with a sort of sorrowful pride to that silent farewell.

CHAPTER VII.

WHICH CLOSES THIS THIRD BOOK OF THE NOVEL WITH THE STRANGE SPECTACLE OF
A SLEEPING WOMAN KISSING A PICTURE.

AND NOW, the field being clear for her operations, our little Agamemnon in petticoats prepared for her part of the affair. She was fully determined to root out of her daughter's mind the memory of Percival Brent, and to marry Sophia brilliantly before many months were out. No sooner had the young lover departed than she perceived how much she had furthered her own ends by her indulgence to her daughter these last few days, especially at the parting hour. Sophia was quite tender with her when they met, kissed her, fondled her, and was all the evening so affectionate amidst her hardly-repressed grief, that the little plotting woman began to discover a soft place in her own stony heart. She was gentle with Sophia, and took no direct notice of the poor girl's tears, which would come once or twice during the evening; only, as she passed, stroked her head softly, intending to signify that she sympathised with her, which she really did. To-morrow she would turn over her new leaf.

'Sophy,' she said at breakfast, 'it is ten years this month since we were in Paris. I have a fancy to go over there before the weather gets too hot. Would you like it?'

'Anywhere with you, dear,' Sophy replied cheerfully. She was determined not to mope, and to begin early.

'That's pleasant,' the mother answered, with a beaming look. 'We shall start this day week.'

Dresses had to be ordered, hotels had to be chosen, a hundred preparations had to be made, and Mrs. Temple saw with exultation that Sophia entered into all the plans with great spirit. The mother read in this a sign that already Percival was fading out of mind. 'I was sure he would,' the little woman said to herself. 'Of course he *must* as time goes on.'

They stayed a month in Paris, and the whole of the time she managed to keep Sophia entertained in the most diverting way. They had friends there, and the days were passed in a set of choice little pleasures; and whatever that inexhaustible purse of Mrs. Temple's could do to burnish the hours was done with her own taste and tact.

'I shall show Sophia what the world is!' the world's worshipper said to herself; 'and that Australian boy will soon vanish from her mind, and love in a cottage with him. Cottage, indeed!—not if you can get a house; and not a house if you can get a mansion! O, it is wonderful how slow Sophia is to see the value of life! But she is beginning, and with her good sense she will soon be able to teach instead of being taught.'

And now, to Mrs. Temple's unspeakable gratification, there appeared on the scene a man who was plainly thinking of making Sophia an offer. Had the little woman been choosing a suitor she could not—so she said afterwards—have made a more promising selection. I must not say much about him. He was ten years Sophia's senior, sedate but not gloomy in his manner, his fortune was ample, his birth high, and his appearance was considered prepossessing. He had long been resident in the neighbourhood of Kettlewell, but in Paris it was they were first introduced. He met the mother and daughter at dinner. Mrs. Barbara Temple, hearing of him before, had already wished inly that he might be struck with Sophia. She marked him as he walked into the room, and at sight of him her wishes redoubled. During dinner she watched him narrowly. For a time he did not seem to have even noticed Sophia, but at last he looked at her. The little mother saw his gaze arrested in pleasurable surprise, and for the rest of the evening he managed to look at the young girl as often as possible.

The next day the stranger, whose name was Prendergast, made some excuse for calling upon them, and you may be sure he was graciously received. His conversation pleased Sophia, that was plain; and Mrs. Temple, watching him, saw in his manner that which delighted her beyond expression.

Next day a fresh invitation came from the friend at whose house they had first met—just a hasty party, the note said.

'Aha,' little Mrs. Temple said to herself, 'a hasty party! Got up at the instigation of Prendergast, I dare swear. Sherwood and he are such friends. If Prendergast does not take Sophia down to dinner, I am much mistaken.'

He did. And he proved a genial companion, with plenty of talk of the quieter sort. He could interest cultivated women, being artistic and literary, without being a pedant or a bore—that, at least, was his friends' opinion of him.

'Don't you think Mr. Prendergast very entertaining?' the mother asked as they drove home.

'Very,' Sophia replied emphatically.

The little woman nearly skipped off her seat for triumph.

During these early days Mrs. Temple could never quite make out whether or not Sophia perceived that this promising Mr. Prendergast was in love with her. In love he clearly was, but his manner was so unobtrusive, and his general conversation so lively, that even Sophia might not have detected what was plain to the watching eyes of her mother. It was a nice point for Mrs. Temple to settle. Sophia evidently enjoyed their new friend's society, and as she was no coquette—not as much as she ought to be, her mother used to say—she must either have forgotten one lover or not recognised the other. Which was the fact Mrs. Temple longed to know. Sometimes she thought Sophia was in reality preoccupied, and only assumed a vivacity to cover her want of interest. At other times, and more frequently, Mrs. Temple felt convinced that she was truly pleased with Prendergast, and would, after a decent interval, confess her satisfaction.

At last an evening came when Prendergast, calling in upon the Temples, found the mother and daughter at home, and, after a little conversation, music happened to be mentioned, at which Mrs. Barbara made the most casual remark about Sophia having sung a particular song the night before. Prendergast asked if he might hear it, and Sophia, consenting, with a listless air sat down to the piano and sang. Prendergast praised the song, asked for another and another, and Sophia complied in the same listless way. She sang well, but her eyes had a kind of far-off look, very suggestive of Australia. The little mother, however, could not see Sophia's face: Prendergast's she saw, and it told her a great deal. At last Sophia began, 'Oft in the still Night,' and now (no doubt because the theme touched her) she sang with great expression and tenderness, and her admirer stood over her, radiant with love and admiration.

'O, that I could see her!' murmured Mrs. Barbara. She scanned Sophia eagerly when the song was finished, but her expression said neither 'Yes' nor 'No.' Shortly after, Prendergast bid them good-night, and restrained as his manner usually was, he now, either through accident or with design, let Sophia know the state of his heart. Mrs. Barbara Temple saw a flush come out on her daughter's pale face as she withdrew her hand from his.

'Now we shall see,' thought the little woman. 'Very prettily he managed it too—I observed nothing.'

She resolved not to ask Sophia any question until next morn-

ing; but after she had retired a little while, curiosity got the better of her, and in her dainty dressing-gown she crossed over to her daughter's room, and, tapping gently at the door, stepped in.

She saw—not what she expected. Sophia was not at her glass, nor chatting to her maid, nor gone to sleep. The poor girl was at her prayers, and had not heard her mother enter. The little woman stood a moment irresolute, then vanished from the room with a kind of hop; she scarcely liked the prospect of confronting the serious face which she knew would rise to greet her from between those uplifted hands.

'I shall go to bed,' she said, when she regained her own room; 'and I shall talk to Sophia in the morning.'

She sat down, however, and fell into a muse, and a look of unwonted gravity ruled her face and features for a time. Probably she was recalling past scenes; for two or three times she shook her head with a kind of reflective sadness, until she was roused by the second chime, which had sounded since she last sat down.

'I wonder if Sophy is up now?' she murmured. 'She can't be at *that* so long.'

And changing her mind she again stepped over, and finding the door ajar as she left it, she entered the room once more. The lamp was still burning, but Sophia was in bed, and, her silence indicated, sleeping. The mother walked softly across and looked at her daughter.

She was fast asleep. The night was warm, and she had thrown back the quilt a little, and her arm, her brown hair, and a glimpse of her white and innocent breast, together with the repose of her expression, made up a picture which many an artist would have given a year's income to paint. She looked the very image of purity and peace, and even little Mrs. Barbara, who was shot-proof against most forms of emotion, felt moisture stealing into her eyes as she gazed. She bent a little down, and then she saw that the face, now so calm, had been traversed by recent tears. Yes, Sophia had been crying since she lay down, and she had fallen asleep with wetted cheeks.

Something in her hand caught the mother's eye, and she looked closer still. Her hand was beside her face, and the little article she held was placed so that her sleeping lips just touched it. With great caution and stillness, Mrs. Barbara Temple lowered her eyes, and, stooping and stretching, she managed to see what her daughter was holding. It was a miniature of Percival Brent.

(To be continued.)

PICTURES OF DUTCH LIFE.

By ELISE A. HAIGHTON.

I.—BUSKEN-HUET.

THOUGH not the greatest Dutch novelist, Busken-Huet may yet be pronounced representative of national life, for in his pages we meet with realistic pictures of Dutch every-day existence, such as are revealed to us by the paintings of Brouwer, Ostade, Teniers, Jan Steen, De Hooghe, and others. Not that he is the first or the only person who has depicted Dutch home-life. The authoresses Wolff and Deken, in their *Sara Burgerhard* and other works; Jacob van Lennep, in his *Klaasje Zeventer*; E. J. Potgieter, and other novelists, have done so before him. But they depicted Dutch home-life in the past, although it was a past nearer to our own time than that immortalised by the great artists of the seventeenth century. Busken-Huet gives us the life of to-day, such as we should find it in any of those quaint red-brick houses, alongside any of those canals, in any of those wide flat reaches, so familiar to us in paintings.

Busken-Huet, who now resides in Paris, was born at the Hague, and educated at its public school. In 1844 he became a student at the University of Leyden, and passed thence to Switzerland, completing his studies at Geneva and Lausanne. In 1851 he was appointed minister to the Walloon congregation at Haarlem. After holding the post eleven years he felt obliged to resign it, owing to a change of views. For a brief space he still occasionally conducted the services; but his principles

would not suffer him to continue this. He grew restless; he began to feel that there was not room enough for his talents in Holland. He had obtained employment upon a daily paper; but in Holland to be a contributor to a daily paper is to work hard, and yet barely gain a livelihood. Busken-Huet was discontented with the general state of public affairs, and he was especially disgusted with his own party. He thought the Liberals at fault, and expressed his views in rather hard terms. Being one of the editors of the Dutch magazine *Gids* ('The Guide'), he published in one number two articles that caused a great stir among a nation generally so tranquil. The one was an attack upon the policy of the Liberal leader Thorbecke; the other ridiculed the Dutch Court, and above all, the Queen, who was much beloved. The articles sowed discord among the eight editors of the magazine, of whom only one, E. J. Potgieter, a leading author and poet, took Huet's part. Huet, disgusted with the laxity of the Liberals, went over to the enemy, and betrayed his party. He accepted the offer of a chief editorship of a daily Conservative paper, published in Batavia, and retreated to that colony. From this post he obtained a splendid remuneration. A few years ago he returned to Europe, and is still writing for this paper, though living in Paris.

Busken-Huet, although he is past fifty, cannot be better charac-

terised than by calling him a boy, and such he will remain till his last breath. He cannot leave off doing mischief—literary mischief, of course. He is just like a street-boy who flings a stone at a passer-by, not because he wishes to hurt him, but because he cannot resist the temptation to play a trick. Huet is the happy possessor of much wit; his power of sarcasm is well developed; he is fully master of his language. But while he plays tricks upon others, his wit, in its turn, often plays tricks upon him. It makes him say things he cannot justify. A *jeu de mots* is something irresistible to him, regardless of the pain it may occasion to the person to whom it is applied. He often commits murder by so doing. Yet he does not mind whom he wounds, whom he kills. Many a time it has been a writer of talent, one in whom he should have recognised his equal. But he must not be judged too severely for all this. His faults are in great part the result of belonging to so small a nation as the Dutch. And, indeed, in several respects, he may be considered a victim. He has been wronged by his countrymen. Nor is he the only one of whom this is true. Of late years mediocrity has been in the ascendant in Holland. There is no room to be found for superior men. Huet belongs to the superior ones; but others have borne their hard fate more worthily.

Huet is not only, or chiefly, a novelist, though he has produced many novelettes of the kind of which a few short specimens follow. He has also written a novel in two volumes, called *Lidewyde*. There is no lack of beauty in this work, though it is marred by many blemishes. The work proved that Huet could never become a great novelist, and what he has published since confirms this

opinion. His most remarkable productions are his essays, especially his *Eerste Fantasiën*. Above all else Huet is an observer, and, as such, we shall behold him.

GITJE.

If any one had asked us at that time—we speak of our childish, our boyish years—concerning the name and appearance of Brigitta van der Plas, we should have answered, ‘Whom do you mean? We have not the honour of knowing such a lady.’ Had the rejoinder been, ‘What! you do not know Brigitta van der Plas, the seamstress, who was in the service of your parents so many years!’ we should have replied again with the exclamation, ‘Ah, you mean Gitje, our seamstress! Yes, indeed, we know her very well. Give us a pair of scissors and a piece of paper; we will at once make you a likeness of her. But how could we have thought that Brigitta van der Plas was the same person as our Gitje?’

You may be sure we never heard her called anything but Gitje. The future master or mistress begins already as a child to show an aristocratic, no doubt a well-educated indifference to the fate and the circumstances of the servants. But work-people’s children also have aristocratic feelings. We, who were the children of well-to-do people, had never given it a thought, either that Gitje could be the abbreviation of Brigitta, or that our seamstress could allow herself the luxury of a family name. Still you might say van der Plas sounds modest and simple enough.

Three or four times a week Gitje came to practise her trade at our parents’ house. One of her regular occupations was to mend our blue-and-white-striped blouses, in whose sleeves we managed to tear

such wonderfully large holes. At other times she would iron upstairs in the nursery, the windows of which looked out on the garden, and in which also stood a mangle and a linen-press. She was a beautiful ironer. When she had put her irons to the fire and all was in order, she would take the ironing-board from the wall against which it leaned, and put it down in the usual way, *i.e.* like a bridge, with one end resting on the trestle-table and with the other on the back of a chair. Thus Gitje, standing in the middle, had plenty of room to move her arms and put her things down. The board was swathed in a half-scorched woollen blanket, and reminded us of a thin old woman covered with a flannel vest. There was nothing more amusing than to watch Gitje when she ironed our sister's balldresses. After they had been damped and rolled up sufficiently long, she would take up a dress, and, lifting the ironing-board at one side, slip the frock over it. Then she took one of the irons out of the red-hot iron pot at her left-hand side, held it for a moment very close to her cheek to feel if it was as hot as she wanted, rubbed it lightly on a cloth lying for that purpose at her right hand, and then began her real operations. The balldress, first a limp, draggled, shapeless mass, gained crispness and form with every touch of the iron. My sisters were only half satisfied if they were going to a ball and any one but Gitje ironed their dresses.

Once a month* the scene of

Gitje's labours was down-stairs in the breakfast-room. This happened when the linen had come home. The family to which we belong was a very large one, and consequently our washing was also large. Now we purpose to describe the management of a very large one; large not in the etymological sense, but in the technical. Gitje's help was indispensable. She descended from the less sacred sphere of the nursery, and was closeted with our mother in the breakfast-room, the holy of holies. Nothing was more fascinating than to watch our mother and Gitje stretch the numerous tablecloths and sheets. They did it exceedingly neatly; ay, not only neatly, but with energy, with enthusiasm. They stood at the head and foot of the large oblong table. The sheets, still unstretched, lay in gradually-diminishing piles on the left-hand side, while those already stretched lay in an ever-increasing heap upon the right. In the middle lay their present victim, several yards long, and pale as death, while they pinched it between their fingers. Their elbows pressed closely to their sides, their right feet forward, the upper part of their body thrown backwards, stood the two women, the mistress and the maid, and stretched, stretched, stretched as fast as they could—types of simplicity and fulfilment of duty, and pictures of Dutch home-life. For us, who looked on passively, but nevertheless with the greatest interest, the question of questions was: will Gitje presently draw our mother over the table? or will our mother be quicker than she and draw Gitje across? Will our mother drop the sheet? or will Gitje open her fingers, and, as a preventive measure proceeding solely from a principle of permissible self-defence, play a trick upon our mother? or will the sheet

* A wash once a month in a Dutch household is called a children's wash. The house-linen and the body-linen of the grown-up people are only sent away to be washed three or four times a year. The above description applies to the present day, with the exception that the mistress does not now generally help in the work, and that instead of the breakfast-room, the linen is dressed in the upper or lower parts of the house.

tear in the middle? Will Gitje keep one end in her hand and our mother the other? and will the sorrowful close of the matter be that Gitje's head will fall against the mantelpiece, while our mother's will recoil against the wainscot, and thus both of them be hurt?

Meanwhile the dexterous women stood immovable, emulating each other in perseverance. The pile on the right grew bigger and bigger, and before dinner-time the heap on the left had disappeared.

With the beginning of autumn came the preserving of greens and fruits. Good gracious! what a number of things were brought into our house with Gitje's assistance! We, who never felt too grand to help for a little while, if required, with the mangling, used also in our childhood, under Gitje's guidance, to string a great many beans, especially the small French beans. Afterwards, when we could be trusted without danger with a knife, we also helped with the large beans, which, as you know, are so much more difficult to manage. Besides this, we saw Gitje throw numberless white cabbages into a cask, after she had cut them into little bits. Then she pressed them down with a wooden pestle, and, last of all, she covered them with a few heavy stones placed on a board nearly as large as the width of the cask. This is to induce fermentation in the contents of the cask, in contradiction to the Dutch proverb, 'What lies in the cask does not ferment.'

What lies in the cask does not turn sour. So people say; and it would be ignoble to undermine the hopeful trust in the future embodied in this proverb. Gitje too spoke in this manner* as often as she thought of Leendert van Kuyk, and this happened now and then. You ask why? Well, here our narrative takes quite a new turn.

He was, and had been for years and days, her lover. At the time of which we are speaking the silver wedding of their engagement already lay far, far behind them. 'Incredible!' you exclaim. Well, I cannot give you faith. We can assure you, as a well-sifted and well-confirmed fact, that Brigitta van der Plas had been for twenty-seven years the sweetheart of Leendert van Kuyk. And then? Then Leendert van Kuyk died of the cholera at the age of fifty-five.

His profession was making fishing-tackle. We used to buy angling-rods, fishing-lines, hooks, and floats in great quantities at his little shop; and sometimes, poor though he was, he would make us a present for Gitje's sake. At that time we really did not know that he led such a poor life. On the contrary, we thought him very well off indeed. Had he not a large stock in his little shop, an enviable abundance of fishing-tools? Did it not make our mouths water to see his angling-rods, his trammels and drag-nets; his imitation breeze-flies, dunflies, gadflies, beetles, and other kinds of bait? We dreamed of nothing more precious or desirable than his worm-boxes, made of painted tin, and intended to be worn slung across the shoulders, as a cavalry officer carries his cartridge-boxes. But, even if we had been acquainted with Leendert's poor circumstances, we should none the less have accepted his presents. Children are not only haughty, but greedy. See how, after the death of a little brother or sister, they immediately confiscate the dead child's toys—dolls with real hair and movable eyes, magic-lanterns, humming-tops—and divide them, wrangling as to ownership. You see at once these are grown-up people in the bud. The wolf-nature is already in them. The

first time they will share a real inheritance you will see them attack it with greed, unless they have learnt in the mean time to behave themselves in accordance with the requirements of society.

Leendert and Gitje were not exactly a nice-looking couple, still they were not repulsive. They belonged to those worthy lovable people to whose features one pays no attention after one has spent two days in their company. Goodness and fidelity, the foundations of their character, radiated from both their faces. In the summer holidays, early in the morning, before daybreak, Leendert would take us out fishing; and then his kindness was boundless. He woke us by ringing the bell, and then waited patiently at the street-door till we were ready; carried our barrels for us, showed us the places where we should have the best chances, gave us his own paste and worms, and presented us with the greater part of his catch. He fished splendidly. Do not fancy every one can fish if he likes. Angling especially requires much instinct and long practice. The tales Leendert told us of his exploits and good-luck—of innumerable three-pounder perches which he had caught one after another in a small ditch; of eels which he had to split up to their tales to regain his fishing-hook; of pikes which had swum away with his rod; of bleeding tenches that cry like new-born babes; of large eels which he had skinned in the morning, and which bit his finger next evening. We believed them all, as we did the *Arabian Nights*. Two things in special we learnt from him. In the first place, how to put a new hook on the line, and to cover it over with tin-foil, so that it hung quite straight and did not slope away from the float; an indispensable condition that alone

makes it possible for the angler to know surely if, and in what measure, the fish has bitten. In the second place, we brought from the school of Gitje's faithful lover this lesson: when the fish has really bitten, and the angler is ready to strike, he should always do so by pushing it, and not by pulling. In the latter case, when the little fish has not bitten well, it swims away backwards with your bait in its mouth, and grants you at most a bloody piece of its gill. In the former case, you oblige the creature to tumble, and by so doing you insert with deadly force the angle through the horny substance of the open lips.

Of Gitje's appearance in her spring-time, when she was twenty-three years of age, and plighted her troth to her Leendert, he himself could have told you more than we are able to do, had not the great angler, Death, taken him away. At the time of which we are speaking, all womanly beauty had fled from her. She was then between forty and fifty, very tall, looking delicate and weak, suffering much from catarrhs and rheumatism, and carrying always a silver snuff-box (containing coarse snuff and a tonga-bean) about her. Now that we have grown older and wiser, we do not think these peculiarities at all ridiculous. On the contrary, we feel that we have a right to make Leendert's betrothed, who was fifty-five years old, and who carried a tonga-bean in her pocket, the heroine of a novellette. While yet a child, and having never pondered the rudiments of our art, we laughed at Gitje's tediously long engagement and her old-maidish complaints. For children are not only haughty and greedy—they are also cruel. They like to laugh at the misfortunes they do not understand. We did not, however, commit this cruelty.

But this was not from amiability of disposition, but because the true relations between Leendert and our seamstress were not known to us till the funeral of the former, and because we had never even wondered why this man treated us with such marked kindness.

The first information of Leendert's death, and of his long courtship of Gitje, did not make us laugh, you may be sure; but still it did not make that impression which the sad event deserved. This proves that, had we been sooner informed, we should undoubtedly have made many jokes about Gitje and her lover. We heard the news from our mother in answer to our question why, on a certain morning, Gitje had not come.

'What is the reason Gitje has not come to-day?'

'Leendert is dead, and is at this moment being buried.'

SATURDAY EVENING ON THE LITTLE GREEN-MARKET AT THE HAGUE.

On Saturdays in the beginning and at the end of summer, especially between nine and ten in the evening, there was to be seen at the Kleine Groenmarkt a scene as bright and varied as it is possible to imagine. It is a picture of van Schenkel that has gained life and reality. It is clear moonlight. The rows of houses cast deep large shadows. Art has produced light where Nature has either refused it, or dispensed it too scantily. Here burn magic lamps surrounded by large piles of greens and fruit; there sparkles a candle, incased in an oil-paper globe, from the wheel-barrow of that son of Israel. Yonder, out of the open shambles, glows the mysterious red light of torches. At the sheds, piled up with greens, sit women, silent and very busy, anxious to sell off their wares. Behind the wheelbarrows

stand Jews and Jewesses, bawling loudly, praising their goods with fiery ardour now that they have ended their Sabbath celebrations. In and out of the shambles hurry relays of maid-servants carrying marketing-baskets on their left arms, and front-door keys on their right thumbs. This spot is specially dear to them. Here they meet their fellow-servants from the other end of the town. Here the artilleryman or dragoon of their choice is waiting, and they can exchange a few sweet words of love. There is a buzz of many voices, for the concourse is large. The bustle distracts your brain. You are in the midst of the weekly carnival of the Hague citizens.

Albert and Pietje are walking arm-in-arm, whispering confidentially. Behind them, as near as the crowd permits, skulks Samuel. He looks at them incessantly. When they advance, he advances; when they stop, he follows their example. The couple enjoy the liberty they have allowed themselves. Everything that lengthens the walk is welcome to them. Every incident is a reason for lingering longer. Now it is the quack, who stands in front of the town-hall upon a raised stage, and whose impudent gabble detains them. He is recommending in high-flown terms a male walnut, i.e. a worm-eaten nutmeg, and asserts that its possession is 'to you, O women, your purse; to you, O men, the pocket of your trousers; for it will keep from your dear bodies all manner of illness and disease!' Now they halt at the shambles; now they stop near the stony little island, consisting of half-a-dozen trees planted in a circle, where a man is giving a vociferous explanation of a coarse daub of a picture. I will explain it to you.

On this island, between the

trees, fixed upon a pole, hangs a large picture. It is no Rembrandt. Properly speaking, it is twelve pictures or more, painted upon one canvas. This material bond is not the only one by which the parts are united. There is also a unity of subject, for it depicts a horrid murder, committed by two country lads, in a village inn, upon the host and his wife. The youth of the murderers and their early development in wickedness is represented at the top of the picture in the left-hand corner. Picture number one is an apple-tree, in whose branches sit two boys stealing its fruits; while at the foot stands an indignant school-master, long-coated, bald-headed, shaking his fist at the culprits. Number fourteen, at the bottom of the right-hand corner, shows a square of bayonets, borne by about fifty invisible soldiers. They are standing upon guard round a scaffold on which the former apple-thieves are to be hanged by the neck until they be dead. Pictures two to thirteen tell the whole sad psychological development, to defraud, to drink, to steal, to drink yet again, to commit burglary, to murder, to fall into the hands of the police, to be judged, to deny, to confess, to scold Wýntje, to accuse Tryntje,* to be spoken to earnestly by the Lord Chief Justice, and to end as on number fourteen. A man and a woman, proprietors or showmen of the instructive painting, do all they can to point out its beauties of thought and execution. The man is armed with a long bamboo-cane, with which he points out the different periods of the story without looking up at the picture, and yet without making a mistake. He

explains the events in blank verse, relieved by rhymed and pithy refrains. The woman, who joins in the refrain, accompanies it to the sounds of a barrel-organ. The weight of this instrument, which she carries round her neck by means of a leathern strap, presses her thin shoulders together. Before her, on the lid, are a wailing child of some fifteen months, and a tin box to hold the pennies. The man has retained a look of well-being. It may be that the great lump of tobacco that he holds in his mouth, and which has swelled out his cheek, makes his face look better nourished, and that he would certainly not think himself a well-fed man. The woman looks far more decrepit than he. Her shrill voice, which even sounds above the organ, reveals the great exhaustion that is expressed by the whole appearance of her body. But why do I trouble about the looks of these grown-up people? If their way of getting their living is despicable, the results scanty, it is certain that neither he nor she can carry on a more honourable means of livelihood, and that they do not deserve a better piece of bread. Let them see to it themselves, how they finish their days, and how they justify their doings.

But what crime has that pale thin child committed, that it should be condemned to spend its earliest life coughing on the lid of a street organ? Probably he is the successor to half-a-dozen male and female predecessors, who have been borne one after another on this throne—a throne as shaky as many another. Perhaps the four elder ones are training for rope-dancers, while the two younger are exercising themselves in imitating. But, perhaps, we are only letting our fancy work. Does it matter, you think, if these brothers and sisters exist only in our ima-

* The Dutch use the expression Wýnte and Tryntje to explain that the crime is founded on the abuse of spirits, and the companionship of women of ill-fame.

gination? Is it of great consequence whether there are many or only this one? Here, anyway, is a child, a human being, miserable and wretched, suffering for the laziness and carelessness of its father and its mother; a sick child that is starving bodily and mentally, although it has done nothing to deserve this fate. That is the great point; and that is quite enough. The observer who has an open eye for the comical side of things must also have an open heart for their misery. Amidst your pleasant meditations you here touch a painful enigma.

ALONG THE CHURCHYARD.

Every one has his own ideal. She would, of course, not have been yours. I speak of Gerritje, the fisherman's daughter, when she was between twenty and twenty-one years of age. Not that she was not at that time a good-looking woman, of neat and tidy appearance the whole year round. By no means. Perhaps she might even be called the rose of the villagers. In any case it is certain that he who saw her on Sunday morning sauntering to church, accompanied by her father and mother, or met her on Sunday evening walking with half a dozen friends along the seashore, would declare that rarely had he seen two fresher dimpled cheeks, two whiter rows of teeth, and two better shaped feet, encased in white-lined green slippers and the cleanest of stockings. But let us mention only her Sunday suit, and leave alone her work-a-day clothes—more rags than clothes. She wore a stiff-stretched cap of coarse net, tastelessly embroidered; two long golden earrings, hanging down along the cheeks, and fastened on the top to a lock of false hair; a gaudy red-and-yellow-flowered cot-

ton jacket; a huge apron of a blue-and-violet lace, tied on at the back between the shoulder-blades, where the collar of the jacket is plaited together in the form of a rosette; an ugly red-coral necklace, fastened with a lock not much smaller than three inches square; nothing of all this resembles in the least degree what Dante loved in Beatrice, Rousseau in Juliet, Werther in Lotte, or Lamartine in Elvire.

And, then, could Gerritje write? She understood better how to drive into town with her dog-cart full of shell-fish. Could she read? It was much easier to her to carry a chest of drawers or a kitchen-stove upon her head from the town to the village. Could she play the piano? No; but when her father was ill she could go with her cart to the shore, and harness and unharness the stout horse very deftly. Had she a nice voice? If she repeated a joke at 'Halfweg' you could hear her laugh at the town-gate. Would it be likely that a young man would beg for a kiss? It might be; but a glance at her fleshy hands made even the most audacious male flirt instinctively seize hold of his ears, as though they tingled already from a blow.

Arie's cheek had never glowed from such a box on the ears. But neither was he a flirt, though he had begged Gerritje for a kiss, and even for more than one. He was no dandy from the town, but a courageous fisherman, sprung from fisher blood; a giant outwardly, inwardly a child; blameless, open-hearted, and not rough. He was no fop from the town; he courted with the intention to marry, and Gerritje accepted him, though he was many years older than she. With regard to their natures, they were made for each other. Her independence, her rather too independent mind, bent willingly to the authority of Arie's love; and

where he had too much of gravity and earnestness, she balanced it by her easy temper. Humanly speaking—for it came about just otherwise—she could better have missed him than he her. She was his sunshine, his life, his all. At every separation, for however brief a space, he felt himself abandoned and lonely. The invisible world existed for him only in the shape of Gerritje's name; faith, hope, love, were all called by him Gerritje. Too clever for a fisherman—but so he was.

We described Gerritje: fresh and stern and joyful, and also tender, but for him alone. Such she was, and as such he loved her dearly as his sweetheart and his wife for ten long years. The number is exact; for just at the beginning of May 1855, in honour of their ten years' wedding-day, he had presented her with a cake; and next June, by the birth of their fourth child, she was taken away by death within a few moments.

Their eldest child, a boy of between seven and eight, was like milk and blood; the second and third, also boys, had died in their cradles; the fourth, a mortal stab to the mother, was a girl. The midwife said, 'A healthy child that will certainly sustain all dangers.' It sustained every danger, and became, according to the neighbours, as fat as a little mole, thanks to bread-and-milk and bread-porridge.

The loss of his wife was for Arie a blow that quite struck him down. In the twilight, the day before her funeral, he was sitting opposite the fireplace, next to the open coffin, feeling little faith and no hope. He lifted up his head out of his hands, that were wet with tears, and looked out straight before him. Thus there came within his view the last present he had made to Gerritje, the same cake

which recalled the remembrance of their tenth wedding-day, and which Gerritje, with housewifely care, had put upon the mantelpiece for show. 'A trifle, but given by a loving heart,' was the inscription, deciphered with difficulty by Arie. Without knowing how it came about, these words riveted his attention. They no longer expressed what they had meant originally—Arie's love for his wife. Their meaning enlarged; he looked upon them with another eye; he transferred them to another dominion; he connected them with thoughts on the leader of his destiny. Overcome by an inclination to murmur, he thought them half true, half untrue, but a more untruthful than truthful description of his present state. 'A trifle?' he said, in a questioning tone. 'Yes, indeed a trifle; for what have I had? Not even my copper wedding-feast! What remains to me? Exceedingly little. To work all day and all night until I look worn and black, and when I leave my boat not even to find a kind face to gaze upon. I am now left to myself with two little children. The boy matters less; he will make his way. But what shall I do with the baby? Little, terribly little—and does it come from a loving heart?' He rose, and paced up and down the little room. As long as prosperity endured, he had believed and prayed, or rather said grace more often than prayers, and both more mechanically than from a desire to do so. Now that Gerritje was dead—Gerritje dead!—his whole soul, with all the strength that was in him, revolted against the idea that the fate of men could be directed by One with a loving heart. Impossible; it could not be true! If so, why was Gerritje not left where she was and where she could not be spared? Why take away the wife from the hus-

band, the mother from the boy, the nurse from the babe? Once more he put the question, 'From a loving heart, from a loving heart?' and while he lighted the lamp and returned to the coffin once more to devour Gerritje's corpse with his eyes, he muttered sadly between his clenched teeth, 'A remarkable fellow who is able to believe that!'

Yes, Arie, a remarkable fellow, and at the same time a good one; a better and wiser one than you are at present. Best part of your error must be laid at the door of the old spinster Kasper. She, who was very orthodox, had scarcely heard of Gerritje's death when she rushed to Arie to inquire concerning her last moments, and whether she had died as a good Christian.

Arie was angered. She grew so too, and spoke to him of death and perdition. Her hard words, joined to the darkness and emptiness in his heart occasioned by Gerritje's death, had disgusted Arie with every consolation offered by religion. The tall strong man could not forget the white sugar letters written on the upper part of the sixpenny cake. Although eloquent enough to refute the spinster Kasper, he could find no words as often as the evil spirit residing in his own heart began to speak and to incite him. Other people he could silence, but not himself. This happens frequently to a great many, to nearly all of us. For, you see, to preach and to practise are two quite different things.

HER STORY.

'We talk of human life as a journey, but how variously is that journey performed! There are those who come forth girt and shod and mantled to walk on velvet lawns and smooth terraces, where every gale is arrested and every breeze tempered. There are others who walk on the Alpine paths of life against driving misery and through stormy sorrows, over sharp afflictions—walk with bare feet and naked breast, jaded, mangled, chilled.'—SYDNEY SMITH.

O, SHE was blithe when the hawthorn blossomed,
Brown as a nut and honest-eyed;
Nodding to life she went out to meet it,
Glad that her world was fair and wide.

So fair, so wide, it must hold much blessing,
A joy, a love, not yet awake;
Bright unknown flowers must be blooming yonder,
Where she would sing for love's sweet sake.

So she went on while the days grew longer,
She crossed the stile from May to June,
And the burnished hours were all a pleasure,
Breathing words to her heart's glad tune.

Then came a trembling, like summer dawning,
A sudden gleam, a deeper glow ;
By the silver birches two are dreaming,
Voices blent with the river's flow.

A meeting of hands, soft eyes that linger,
Deep in the other's spirit world,
Whispering the leafy shower hangs over,
Each leaf a tiny sail unfurled.

Let her dream, dream till the spell be broken,
And deem him true and wise and strong ;
Let her kneel once to this glittering idol,
For bliss is short, and life is long.

But from the west swift clouds are hurrying,
Breaks the storm on her guiltless head ;
Hands that ne'er should have met are now parted,
Cleft by a mute resistless dread.

Ah, woe ! ah, woe ! by the silver birches !
Who shall unsay the words he said ?
She may not love and she will not hate him,
But love and joy alike are dead.

The autumn days became November,
The pearly sky grew hard and cold :
She passed once more by the silver birches,
Their leafy shower now turned to gold.

And out of her woe there grew a radiance,—
A peace not born of earthly things ;
Though the summer flowers had long been buried,
Its fledgeless birds had grown their wings.

She was not blithe when the holly ripened,
Nor danced her heart in spring-time glee ;
But when she was old she learnt her lesson,
Waiting for joy till her soul was free.

T. M. S.

A QUEER FELLOW-TRAVELLER.

A True Story.

SOME years ago I had occasion to take a long journey to the north—a journey which would involve my travelling all night. A few days before, I had received an invitation from a friend of mine, who lived at a town which I had to pass, to dine and stay the night at his house; an invitation which I gladly accepted, as it would prove a pleasant break in the monotony of the journey. I resolved therefore to so arrange matters as to arrive at his house in time for dinner, and proceed to my destination next morning. When the day arrived I was very busy; so, after a hurried lunch, I packed up a few necessities and rushed off to Euston, where I arrived with just two minutes to spare. I asked for my train, which the guard pointed out, adding, 'If you don't hurry up, sir, you'll lose it.' I took his advice, and jumped into the nearest first-class compartment, the door of which stood open, and in which there was but one other occupant. I settled myself for my journey, and for the first time had leisure to observe my fellow-traveller. Now I rather pride myself on being a judge of physiognomy, and my first impressions of him were the reverse of pleasant. He was evidently a fidgety nervous sort of man; he had restless gray eyes, without much expression in them; while his hair and beard were of a reddish hue. He was dressed in a long ulster, which I thought quite unnecessary; for though it was late in the year, the weather

was by no means cold. There was on the seat beside him a small oaken box, strongly bound with brass; and his eyes were constantly glancing from this box to me in a way that I did not at all like. I began to have visions of Fenian plots, infernal machines, and I do not know what. After regarding me steadily for a few minutes, he said,

'Is it possible, sir, that you are not aware of this carriage being reserved for State officials?'

I looked around, and seeing no indication of the fact, replied that,

'I was not aware of such being the case.'

'Then, sir,' he replied, 'I must beg of you instantly to vacate it, and leave me here in solitary silence.'

Considering that the train was then going at the rate of about forty miles an hour, and would not stop until it reached a small station half-way to my destination in about an hour's time, I could not quite see how I was to comply with his request, or rather command; and I frankly told him so, adding that 'I had as much right there as he had, and did not intend moving.'

He replied with a most solemn air,

'Then your fate be on your own head.'

This began to frighten me, for the man's manner convinced me that he must be insane; and the prospect of an hour's journey shut up in a first-class railway carriage with a madman was not calculated

to raise my spirits. However, I put a bold face on the matter, and affected to be engrossed with my newspaper, though in reality I was watching his every movement. He suddenly seized hold of the wooden box and held it on his knees, mumbling some inarticulate words, then suddenly replaced it beside him. In doing so I caught a glimpse of the butt of a pistol sticking out of his pocket. Here was a pretty dilemma: shut up in a railway carriage with a man who was decidedly insane, and armed with a revolver or pistol; while I had nothing more defensive than an umbrella and a roll of papers, which, in consequence of their length, I was compelled to carry in my hand. Presently he began again.

'Have you studied the marvellous powers of electricity, may I ask?'

I replied in the negative.

'I have,' said he; 'and have arrived at such a pitch of perfection that, aided by the contents of this box, I could blow this train, and everybody in it, to infinitesimal atoms.'

'But,' I hazarded, 'how about yourself?'

'I should calmly mount into the air, and survey the scene without injury.'

'How?' said I.

'That,' he replied, 'is my business; look to yourself.'

Pleasant this, for me! However, I made some remark which seemed to satisfy him; and he lapsed again into silence. I felt more than ever convinced of his madness, thinking he had probably escaped from some private asylum, for he was evidently a gentleman; yet I could not understand what the box could be which he guarded so jealously. I felt very sorry for him, in spite of my dangerous situation. I

then tried another tack, and made several commonplace remarks to him; to all of which he answered in monosyllables, suddenly bursting out with,

'Do you dare to address me, sir, without having first disclosed to me who you are? Your temerity surprises me!'

I thought it best to humour him, and handed him my card, on which was inscribed: 'J. B. Smith, Quality Court.'

'Ha, I guessed you were a Smith; you look like one; a blacksmith, if I may judge by the smuts on your face.' Here he broke into a maniacal laugh. When he had finished laughing, he said, 'Do you want to know who I am?'

I said I thought I might as well know his name, if he did not mind.

'Well,' said he, leaning forward, and peering into my eyes, keeping one hand on the box, 'when you first jumped into the carriage I was the Khan of Tartary; but the wonders of electricity are such that I am even now changing; I may be anybody in a few hours, or even minutes.' I suppose I looked surprised, for he went on, 'Ah, you look surprised; but perhaps you will hardly believe that my temper quite depends on who I may happen to be. Not long ago I was conversing with some friends, and I suddenly changed into the King of Siam, and before they could get out of my way I bit three of their fingers off. You should have seen them scatter. Ha, ha, ha!'

'Good gracious!' I exclaimed. 'You don't mean it!'

'O, yes, I do; but do not be alarmed, I never am so dangerous unless I happen to assume that character.'

Then he sat quiet, and I was

thankful for a little peace. On looking at my watch I found that we had yet another quarter of an hour before the train would stop. How I wished the time away! for I fully intended to change my carriage at the next stopping station. All at once, to my alarm, he said quite unconcernedly,

‘I feel it my solemn duty to inform you that I am changing, and that in a few minutes I shall be the King of Siam.’

Instinctively I looked around for some means of escape, at the same time grasping my umbrella firm, resolved at least to sell my fingers dearly. Never shall I forget the feeling of thankfulness with which I heard the whistle of the train announcing our approach to the next station. I collected my things together near me, so as to be prepared for a hasty exit, the more so as I noticed the feelings of his Majesty of Siam were being worked up to a pitch of excitement, and the way he showed his teeth would have terrified a far less nervous man than myself. As we neared the station the train slackened speed, and at last stopped. Just as I jumped out the maniac made a spring at me; but I fortunately avoided him, and slammed the door in his face. I got into the next compartment, which was empty; and, as the guard closed the door, I called out, ‘Here, I say, guard, there is a madman in—’ But the whistle drowned the rest of my sentence, and the train moved off before I had time to complete it. I sat still in a horrible state of nervousness, expecting I hardly knew what.

At last the train stopped at the station for which I was bound, and I jumped out. As I passed the carriage I could see him sitting there quietly; and I went

into the station-master’s room and told him shortly what had happened, advising him to take some means of securing him. He promised to telegraph, but said it was no business of his; and with this assurance I had to be content.

I then went off to my friend’s house, where I arrived just in time for dinner. I suppose the traces of my fright still remained; for no sooner did I enter the dining-room than my host exclaimed,

‘Why, what is the matter, old man? You’ve not met a ghost on the road, have you?’

I told him I had seen somebody a good deal worse than a ghost; and, during dinner, I related my adventure, upon which they all congratulated me on my lucky escape. After dinner I went off early to bed, pleading fatigue and the next day’s business as my excuse.

When I awoke in the morning, I found my host ready for breakfast; and I joined him at once, as my train left in an hour’s time. As I shook hands with him at the station, he remarked that he should like to hear of the man being caught.

I transacted my business; and, as I had time to spare, I turned into the first hotel I came to, and walked up into the billiard-room, where I met Fred Charlton, an old schoolfellow of mine, who was playing billiards with three other fellows. He seemed surprised to see me, and asked me how I got there. I told him I had come down there early that morning; and I then proceeded to give him a sketch of my adventurous journey of the night before. Fred smiled, and said,

‘Ah, yes, old man; I heard something about it.’

‘You heard something?’ I said.
‘From whom?’

'Well,' he replied, 'I'll tell you all about it, for the benefit of the company. Old Harris, the diamond merchant, told me last night that he had just come down from London. When he had taken his seat in the carriage at Euston all alone, just as the train started, some fellow rushed at his carriage, and jumped in. Harris said he did not much like the look of the fellow; and, as he had about eight thousand pounds' worth of diamonds with him in a small box, he began to feel uncomfortable. He said the stranger was a strong active man, and that if it had come to a struggle for the diamonds Harris would have had no chance—for he evidently felt sure the fellow meant robbery;

so he determined to try and frighten him out of the carriage by pretending madness, which he says he did so effectually that the fellow, in sheer fright, bolted at the first stoppage, and left him to finish his journey here alone. But we did not know that you were the hero, old man,' said Fred, as the whole four burst into such a shout of laughter as I never heard before. 'You must stay, and be introduced to him afresh; he will be here to-night.'

I did not stop to hear anything more. I rushed down-stairs, thoroughly realising that I had been made a fool, caught the first train home, and have not shown myself in that neighbourhood since.

W. B. R.

THE SINGLE CHARM.

(From the German of Herder.)

Not beauty, O thou maiden fair—
Not beauty do we prize;
For, like the sunshine's blazing glare,
'Twill only daze our eyes.

In thine attire, O maiden fair,
No charms we can descry;
The peacock in his train doth wear
Hues which its sheen outvie.

And wit's keen dart, an arrow light,
Doth seldom pierce the heart;
It speedeth by in rapid flight,
Leaves but a stinging smart!

One charm there is all hearts to sway—
One charm alone, I ween;
Dost thou possess it, maiden—say?
'Tis *artlessness* I mean!

BARONESS SWIFT.

FAMILY ANECDOTES.

THERE is probably scarcely a single ancient or noble family—the terms are not quite synonymous—which does not possess a muniment-room, the contents of which have never been edited or calendared, and it fairly makes the mouth of the historical student water to think what treasures of history and of antiquarian gossip lie thus buried. Now and again a noble lord graciously puts his name to a small compilation, or permits some laborious antiquarian to rummage amongst his family archives, and the little that is given to the world in this way creates an irresistible longing for more. One such volume was prepared some sixty years ago for the gratification of the then Earl of Bridgewater. Only a small number of copies were printed; the book itself was never published, and in its present form it naturally belongs to the category of *libri rarissimi*. If any member of the house of Egerton could be induced to reprint it, and to add to it from the stores of family papers preserved at Worsley, he would do a service to literature and to the public generally, the value of which it would not be easy to over-estimate. In the mean time it may be worth while to pick from this book of 'Family Anecdotes' a few of the more striking.

The Egerton family, as every one who is well up in his Burke or Debrett ought to know, has intermarried with about half the peerage, and has alliances with every one of those great governing families, whose predominance has given such strength to the nation

in time of political storm and stress. Amongst those families, that of Churchill is not the least distinguished; but it is curious that the family traditions preserved by the Earl of Bridgewater chiefly relate to the avarice of the great Duke of Marlborough. The following anecdotes on this point will probably be new to most readers, though the second, with considerable variations of detail, has already found its way into print. When, in the early years of the eighteenth century, the Earl of Peterborough was in command of the English forces in Spain and Portugal, he found great difficulty in obtaining the necessary supplies. In order to rectify matters he returned home; but on application at headquarters he found all his demands held over for further consideration, whilst the Duke of Marlborough obtained all he wanted without the smallest difficulty. 'Much disgusted withal,' says Lord Bridgewater, 'he threw himself into a sedan-chair, and drew the curtains at the sides as well as at the front, that he might not be known or seen. The populace took up an idea that the person in the chair was the Duke of Marlborough; they gathered round it. "God bless the Duke of Marlborough! God bless the Duke of Marlborough!" "Gentlemen," said Lord Peterborough, pushing down one of the windows, "I am not the Duke of Marlborough." "O yes," said a spokesman of the multitude, "you are the Duke of Marlborough; we know you well enough." "Gentlemen," said Lord

Peterborough, "I am not the Duke of Marlborough, I tell you, and I will give you two convincing proofs I am not. One is that I have but a single guinea," and he turned his pockets inside out; "the other is that I give it to you;" and he threw it among them.'

The other story turns also upon the Duke's parsimony. On the eve of a great pitched battle, which was to be fought under the joint command of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene of Savoy, the latter waited upon the Duke after dinner to settle the plan of action for the following day. 'The Duke had taken up his head-quarters at a small house, which had a little garden before it, and a coach-road. Prince Eugene was received in great state. In driving out of the coach-road it struck Prince Eugene that there was one manœuvre which he had not notified to the Duke. "Drive me back again!" He skipped nimbly into the house; and in the drawing-room where he had been received he found the Duke of Marlborough perched upon a chair, with his handkerchief under his shoes, and whiffing out the candles of the middle piece of lustre.'

Of the first Duke of Bridgewater, Francis Egerton, the friend of Brindley, and the father of inland navigation, we have, as might be expected, several anecdotes. One is very characteristic. He would never allow any one to come to him, though he would readily pay visits; and he explained his conduct in this respect by saying, 'If they come to me, they stay as long as they please; if I go to them, I can stay as long as I please.' Of his thorough independence we get a curious illustration. 'One morning,' says the Earl, 'when the Duke and I were at Ashridge

together, and standing at one of the windows after breakfast, a hack-chaise drove into the park across the lawn in front of the house. "What is that?" said the Duke. "It is a post-chaise," replied one of the servants, "which Lord Dartmouth has sent for Plinkey to take him to the King's kitchen." "Bid Plinkey," said the Duke, "stay at Ashridge, dress my dinner, and not go to the King;" and, in fact, the carriage went back empty. The Earl of Dartmouth was at that time Master of the Household. The Duke wrote to him the following letter:

"My Lord,—I like my cook; I will keep him. No endeavours would have been made to take him from me if . . ."

'We tried,' the Earl goes on, 'to prevent the Duke from sending the above letter. He replied, "Lord Dartmouth may interpret the 'if' as he pleases."'

In the time of the great French war, when every nerve was strained, and when the condition of the country was such that appeals were made to the patriotism of the nation to supplement the taxation by voluntary contributions, the Duke of Bridgewater behaved splendidly. Not merely did he pay willingly every tax that could possibly be demanded of him, and even more, but he subscribed as much as one hundred thousand pounds to the Loyalty Loan, and cordially supported Mr. Pitt and his Government. Once, indeed, he opposed Mr. Pitt, and defeated him; but the question—the Fustian Tax—was not one of much moment. Although, however, he thus aided the Government by every means in his power, he would not receive Mr. Pitt as his guest in Lancashire and Cheshire, always replying to every offer of the great Minister with the most courtly

phrases and the most plausible excuses. 'He will see,' said the Duke to the writer of the volume, as he went in his boat along the navigation, 'how rich the country is, and will find out something in which he may think it will bear additional taxing.'

Here is another anecdote of a stingy peer. 'One day,' says Lord Bridgewater, 'when we were at dinner at Himley, the conversation turned upon an anecdote that was current about old Lord Foley. It was said that a servant of his had found concealed in one of the books of the library an India bond for 1000*l.*, which had been hidden there, but forgotten by old Mr. Foley' (in favour of whose son the ancient peerage had been revived). 'Instantly this servant brought the bond to my lord, delivered it to him as his property (a trover), upon which Lord Foley gave him half-a-crown. "He could not," said Lord Dudley, "give him more." We all stared. "He could not," said Lord Dudley, "for the soul of him."

Turning the page, we come upon a pleasant story of two peers of the realm playing the noble game of 'brag.' The Earl of Breadalbane and the Duke of Rutland were on terms of great intimacy. One day when they were together at Belvoir the Duke said, 'It is so long a journey to Taymouth, and you stay there till just the meeting of Parliament. I wish your estates were in my county.' 'I should be very sorry,' replied Lord Breadalbane; 'my estates would almost cover the whole county of Rutland: I fear your Grace would not have many acres left for yourself.'

Lord Bath is also the subject of many excellent anecdotes. A saying of his concerning the duties of Ministers and the Opposi-

tion deserves to be recorded. 'When one is in Opposition,' said he, 'it is very easy indeed to know what to say; but when one is Minister it is difficult to know what *not* to say.' It is possible, we may remark in passing, that some people will say that there are Ministers whose easy talking in Opposition makes their speeches in office matters of no inconsiderable difficulty. This same nobleman appears to have been pretty much of the opinion of Shennstone, who always found 'his warmest welcome in an inn.' One day when he was going to Longleat, the Earl of Bridgewater tells us, he mentioned the place where he should sleep on the road. 'You will not be so well there as at home.' 'Yes,' said Lord Bath, 'but I like an inn.' 'How can you, master of Longleat, and with your house in Arlington-street, like an inn?' 'Yes,' said Lord Bath; 'I like an inn because they always seem glad to see me.' Lord Bath was not, we learn, an early riser, but he used in return to sit up very late. Lord Loughborough (Wedderburn), who was Chancellor in the same Administration with him, was wont to say, 'I never knew Lord Bath,' and to explain the remark by saying that he 'used to go to bed before twelve, and Lord Bath never was himself—that is, in the plenitude of his faculties and gaiety—until after midnight.'

Of Lord Loughborough himself Lord Bridgewater tells a couple of stories which are not to be found in Campbell's biography of that eminent mediocrity. In his capacity as Chancellor he was, of course, judge of the sanity of suspected lunatics. The heirs of a gentleman of fortune wished to take out a statute of lunacy against him, whereupon Lord Loughborough had him brought up for

examination. A long conversation took place, during which the gentleman answered so pertinently and spoke so well that the Chancellor was almost convinced of his sanity. Towards the end of the examination a slip of paper was thrust into his hand, bearing the single word 'Ezekiel.' This was quite enough for Lord Loughborough, who at once began to speak about the Hebrew prophets. 'What fine poetry,' said he, 'there is in Isaiah!' 'Very fine,' replied the patient; 'especially when read in the original Hebrew.' 'And how well Jeremiah wrote!' 'Surely,' was the reply. 'And Ezekiel too; what a genius was Ezekiel!' 'Do you like him?' said the man. 'I'll tell you a secret; I am Ezekiel.'

The other story is perhaps better. The Earl of Bradford was brought before him for the same purpose, and a conversation followed, in which the Chancellor was completely puzzled. At last he asked, 'How many legs has a sheep?' 'Does your lordship mean,' asked Lord Bradford, 'a live sheep or a dead sheep?' 'Is it not the same thing?' said the Chancellor. 'No, my lord,' said Lord Bradford; 'there is much difference. A live sheep may have four legs; a dead sheep has only two. The two fore-legs are shoulders, but there are but two legs of mutton.'

His residence in the country afforded Lord Bridgewater matter for occasional jesting. One of his anecdotes is of a 'fat, puffy, big-wigged little chap,' who got into the desk to read prayers. The prayer-book was dilapidated, and some leaves were altogether missing. After hunting about for some time, the 'little chap' leaned over into the clerk's pew, and asked in a very audible voice, 'John, John! what has become

of Almighty and most merciful Father? I can't find him.' In another place he tells a story of his father, who declared that he knew the length of an old woman's conscience. An old woman, who was one of the weeders in the garden, accosted him one morning and said, 'My lord, there is a great deal of red tape in the garden-house; may I take some of it?' 'Yes, good woman, certainly,' replied he, 'take enough in conscience.' The head-gardener, who afterwards had occasion for some tape, finding but little left, measured the remainder, and found that the old woman had taken about thirty yards and a half.

The last anecdote we propose to cite illustrates very forcibly the remark with which we set out as to the value of family papers for the elucidation of history. Lord Campbell, in his *Life of Lord Thurlow*, attributes his fall in 1792, in the main justly, to his opposition to Mr. Pitt's Bill for establishing a sinking fund for the redemption of the National Debt. On the day following the violent speech in which he had opposed the great Minister, Thurlow received from him a letter, in which he explained that, being convinced of the impossibility of his Majesty's service being any longer carried on to advantage while Thurlow and himself remained in their present situations, he had addressed the King to that effect. The King at once yielded to Mr. Pitt's wishes, and caused an intimation to be conveyed to Lord Thurlow that his Majesty had no longer any occasion for his services. He was, however, retained in office, as Lord Thurlow states, until the end of the session, during the whole of which time he devoted himself to the task of opposing the Government even in such measures as those for the

abolition of the slave-trade and the relaxation of the law of libel. To his action with regard to the latter proposal Lord Campbell attributes his immediate disgrace. Lord Bridgewater, however, traces it to a violent speech which he delivered on the Hampshire Forest Bill—a measure for encouraging the growth of timber in the New Forest—which Thurlow chose to make a matter of controversy and an excuse for a most virulent attack upon Ministers. His account of the business is really interesting. ‘The Hampshire Forest Bill was brought in by the Administration: Lord Chancellor Thurlow went down to the House of Lords; there he found it, and violently opposed one particular cause. At dinner afterwards he

alleged that he did not know Ministers countenanced the Bill; he had never seen it. It was proved to him that it was sent to him three days ago. The real fact was that he went to the House fretting and fuming; he had just been apprised that his natural daughter (Miss Thurlow) had eloped with and married Mr. Brown. Very grumpy was he; nothing could please him. The next day Lord Bath was the person pitched upon to signify to him that his Majesty had no further occasion for his services as Chancellor. Lord Thurlow was, as it were, thunderstruck. He said little, but he made a point of this: “I desire a copy,” said he, “of that paper,” pointing to the paper in Lord Bath’s hand.’

IN SPRING.

LIKE a child's waking smile the earth's is bright,
The clear blue heavens a far-off sleeping sea,
With here and there a rippling cloud-wave white,
Stretching away beyond the world and me.

Around, the golden gorse is flowering high,
Lush bluebells gem the verdure at my feet ;
And o'er me, as in idlesse deep I lie,
Steals the first breath of spring with Mayblooms sweet.

Beneath, beyond, the green vale opens wide,
With many a farmstead home and grazing steers,
And murmurs, like some half-forgotten tide
Heard in a shell, creep slowly through mine ears.

Innocent voices ! but ye raise the ghosts
That haunt the silent chambers of the past ;
Lean, hollow-eyed, they throng in countless hosts,
And 'tween me and the light their shadows cast ;

And fetter all my will, and surely steep,
Like some insidious opiate on the brain,
My spirit in a dark unwholesome sleep,
Whose dreams the old dread visions shape again :

Of love that found not love for which it yearned ;
Of noble aims distorted into sin ;
And the strong wine of youth abused, and turned
To potent poison for the soul within.

A fool's weak thought ! Here, on this altar-hill,
With Nature's pulses quickening to the fruit
In bud and branch, let the enslaved will
Rise from its slough of sloth, no longer mute.

So sings the bee that hums about my head ;
For ever this the burden of his song :
' Rouse thee ! Time speeds ; bury thy festering dead !
Thy nerves are cramped, for thou hast dreamed too long !'

J. W. T.

HALF-HOURS WITH SOME OLD AMBASSADORS.

VI.

TALLEYRAND AT ST. JAMES'S—HIS LAST YEARS.

IN August 1830, the Duke of Orleans accepted the French crown as Louis Philippe I. Talleyrand, who was a kind of diplomatic 'Vicar of Bray,' was once more to the front, although he was then approaching his eightieth year. He was again offered his old post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, but he declined this office. His powerful aid in establishing the new dynasty, and the reputation which he had acquired abroad, justified him in claiming the highest diplomatic position which his sovereign had to offer—namely, that of ambassador to the Court of St. James's.

This appointment was conferred upon the Prince, and in writing to King William IV. announcing the fact, he said, 'Sire, his Majesty the King of the French has been pleased to make me the interpreter of the sentiments he cherishes for your Majesty. I have joyfully accepted a mission which gives so noble a direction to the last steps of my long public career.

'Sire, amidst all the vicissitudes through which I have passed during my long life, amidst all the changes of good and ill-fortune I have undergone during the last forty years, no circumstance has afforded me such perfect gratification as the appointment which brings me back to this happy country. But how great is the change between the period when I was formerly here and

the present time! The jealousies and prejudices which so long divided France and England have given place to enlightened sentiments of esteem and affection. Unity of feeling rivets the bonds of amity between the two countries. England, like France, repudiates the principle of intervention in the internal affairs of neighbouring States; and the ambassador of a sovereign unanimously chosen by a great nation feels himself at home in a land of freedom, as the missionary to a descendant of the illustrious house of Brunswick.

'I feel that I may with confidence implore your Majesty's kind consideration of the subjects which I am commanded to submit to your attention, and I beg, sire, to offer the homage of my profound respect.'

This letter is written with all the art which Talleyrand invariably threw into his epistolary communications. Circumstances had, indeed, changed since a previous English Ministry had peremptorily ordered Talleyrand out of the country, and a much better reception now awaited the diplomatist. But his appointment as ambassador to London was really a fortunate one. No one else could have supplied his place in England at that juncture. 'He knew well and personally both the Duke of Wellington and Lord Grey, the chiefs of the opposing parties; and it was perhaps his

presence at the British Court, more than any other circumstance of the time, which preserved, in a crisis when all the elements of war were struggling to get loose, that universal peace which for so many years remained unbroken.'

During his stay in England, which extended over a period of five years, Talleyrand enhanced his reputation for diplomacy and statesmanship. He devoted himself to raising the new French Government to a position of equality with the first of European Cabinets, and preserved a judicious attitude in favour of peace. At one time, as the result of the Belgian revolt from the supremacy of Holland, it seemed as though the whole of Europe would once more be plunged into war; but this disastrous end to the Belgian revolution was averted. In the end a new Belgian kingdom was added to the independent States of the Continent. Talleyrand certainly deserves great credit for his persevering determination to maintain a good understanding with England during a period of great peril. He was of course at the same time playing his own game by the establishment of conferences in London, and his proceedings added considerably to the dignity and importance of the French Government whom he served. His diplomatic career closed with the formation of the Quadruple Alliance. He translated into action an observation of his own that 'there is a sort of space between death and life, which should be employed in dying decently.'

We get some interesting glimpses of Talleyrand at St. James's in the *Greville Memoirs*, a work, by the way, which is destined to become very rare and valuable in its original issue; so that if any reader has a chance of laying his

hand upon a copy of the first edition of it, he had better not neglect that opportunity. In August 1831, Mr. Greville met Talleyrand at Stoke. The Prince discoursed freely as usual, but he was difficult to understand, partly no doubt owing to the difficulty of articulation, in consequence of his great age. 'He talked of Franklin,' says the Court gossip. 'I asked him if he was remarkable in conversation; he said he was, from his great simplicity and the evident strength of his mind.' Of the Count de St. Germain, Talleyrand said that 'nobody knew whence he came nor whither he went; he appeared at Paris suddenly, and disappeared in the same way; lived in an *hôtel garni*, had always plenty of money, and paid for everything regularly; he talked of events and persons connected with history, both ancient and modern, with entire familiarity, and with a correctness which was never at fault, and always of the people as if he had lived with them and known them; as Talleyrand exemplified it, he would say, "Un jour que je dinais chez César." He was supposed to be the Wandering Jew, a story which has always seemed to me a very sublime fiction, telling of

"That settled ceaseless gloom
The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore,
Which will not look beyond the tomb,
Which cannot hope for rest before."

Then he related Mallet's conspiracy, and the strange way in which he heard it. Early in the morning his tailor came to his house and insisted on seeing him. He was in bed; but on his *valet-de-chambre* telling him how pressing the tailor was, he ordered him to be let in. The man said, "Have you not heard the news? There is a revolution in Paris." It had come to the tailor's knowledge by Mallet's going to him

the very first thing to order a new uniform. Talleyrand said the conspirators ought to have put to death Cambacères and the King of Rome. I asked him whether, if they had done so, he thought it possible the thing might have succeeded. He said, "C'est possible." To my question whether the Emperor would not have blown away the whole conspiracy in a moment, he replied, "Ce n'est pas sûr; c'est possible que cela aurait réussi."

'He afterwards talked of Madame de Staël and Monti. They met at Madame de Marescalchi's villa near Bologna, and were profuse of compliments and admiration for each other. Each brought a copy of their works beautifully bound to present to the other. After a day passed in an interchange of literary flatteries, and the most ardent expressions of delight, they separated; but each forgot to carry away the present of the other, and the books remain in Madame de Marescalchi's library to this day.'

The Count de St. Germain, mentioned above, was a remarkably learned and accomplished man. He was supposed to have derived his wealth, which was apparently inexhaustible, from an invention in the art of dyeing. He had something of the reputation of a wizard and a conjurer, says the editor of the *Greville Memoirs*, but he was not to be confounded with such charlatans as Mesmer and Cagliostro.

Under date of January 22d, 1833, Mr. Greville writes: 'Dined with Talleyrand the day before yesterday. Nobody was there but his *attachés*. After dinner he told me about his first residence in England, and his acquaintance with Fox and Pitt. He always talks in a kind of affectionate tone about the former, and is now

meditating a visit to Mrs. Fox at St. Anne's Hill, where he may see her surrounded with the busts, pictures, and recollections of her husband. He delights to dwell on the simplicity, gaiety, childishness, and profoundness of Fox. I asked him if he had ever known Pitt. He said that Pitt came to Rheims to learn French, and he was there at the same time, on a visit to the archbishop, his uncle; and that he and Pitt lived together for nearly six weeks, reciprocally teaching each other French and English. After Chauvelin had superseded him, and he and Chauvelin had disagreed, he went to live near Epsom (at Juniper Hall) with Madame de Staël. Afterwards they came to London, and in the meantime Pitt had got into the hands of the *émigrés*, who persuaded him to send Talleyrand away; and accordingly he received orders to quit England (as we have seen) in twenty-four hours. He embarked on board a vessel for America, but was detained in the river off Greenwich. Dundas sent to him, and asked him to come and stay with him while the ship was detained; but he said he would not set his foot on English ground again, and remained three weeks on board the ship in the river. It is strange to hear M. de Talleyrand talk at seventy-eight. He opens the stores of his memory and pours forth a stream on any subject connected with his past life. Nothing seems to have escaped from that great treasury of bygone events.'

On another occasion this remarkable man assured Greville that Cardinal Fleury was one of the greatest Ministers who ever governed France, and that justice had never been done him; he had maintained peace for twenty years, and acquired Lorraine for France.

He said this *apropos* of the library he formed, or left, or whatever he did in that line, at Paris. The great diplomatist also told Mr. Greville that he very often went to the British Museum, and had lately made that institution a present of a book.

When the affairs of Portugal were the subject of serious discussion, and threatened the peace of Europe, Talleyrand took a very decided tone. He laughed non-intervention to scorn, and confessed that for long he had endeavoured to get our Government to take a decided part. What he advised was, that England should recognise Donna Maria and the Regency appointed by the charter—that is, Donna Isabella Regent, with a council to be comprised of Palmella, Villa Flor, and any other; that our Minister should be directed to acknowledge no other government, and at the same time concert with Palmella that Pedro should be sent away, and the constitution be suspended till the Queen should be of age. Pedro was a most objectionable character, as history records. While in Lisbon, at an early stage of his attempts, he committed every folly and atrocity he could squeeze into the brief period of time he was there—imprisoning, confiscating, granting monopolies, attacking the Church, and putting forth the constitution in its most offensive shape.

Matuscewitz records that Louis Philippe consulted Talleyrand in 1834 about the maintenance of his intimate relations with England, and that Talleyrand replied, 'When you came to the throne four years ago, I advised you to cultivate your relations with England as the best security you could obtain. I now advise you to relinquish that connection, for, in the present state of English poli-

tics, it can only be productive of danger or embarrassment to you.'

Talleyrand appears to have expressed himself in two different senses with respect to the character of Lord Palmerston. The following passage, dated August 7, 1836, appears in Mr. Greville's diary: 'The accounts from Spain are deplorable, and it is curious enough that while Palmerston was proclaiming in the House of Commons his conviction of the ultimate success of the Christino cause, he must have had letters from Villiers in his pocket telling him that it was almost hopeless. I saw one from him a few days ago, written in the greatest despondency. He said that he had been stopped on his road to St. Ildefonso by intelligence that the Carlists were approaching the place, and that the Queen had taken flight. He found all the relays of mules ready for her Majesty, and he returned to Madrid. It turned out to be a false alarm, and the Queen stayed where she was; but he said that he could only compare the progress of the Carlists to water spreading over a tableland. It will be a severe blow to Palmerston if this cause is overthrown, though perhaps no fault of his policy. Had France acted fairly, the result of the Quadruple Alliance would have answered the expectations of its authors; but France, instead of coöperating according to the spirit of that treaty, has thrown every impediment in its way. It is surprising to hear how Palmerston is spoken of by those who know him well officially. The Granvilles, for example. Lady Granville, a woman expert in judging, thinks his capacity first-rate; that it approaches to greatness from his enlarged views, disdain of trivialities, resolution, decision, confidence,

and above all his contempt of clamour and abuse. She told me that Madame de Flahaut had a letter written by Talleyrand soon after his first arrival in England, in which he talked with great contempt of the Ministers generally, Lord Grey included, and said there was but one statesman among them, and that was Palmerston. His ordinary conversation exhibits no such superiority; but when he takes his pen in his hand his intellect seems to have full play, and probably when engaged exclusively in business.' At a somewhat later stage Talleyrand had an intense hatred of Palmerston, arising chiefly from a supposed affront to his personal dignity. Talleyrand was deeply mortified at finding the part he played in London to be secondary to that of the British ambassador in Paris, and Palmerston systematically refused to alter this distinction.

It is well known that after the dissolution of the Grey Administration in 1834 the position of Talleyrand at the Court of St. James's was a very uncomfortable one. The men of the new Government, it is said, considered him in a certain degree as antiquated and gone by; a sentiment which he was keen enough to detect and sensitive enough to feel deeply. He left England in 1835, and of course from his great age he could not now expect to enter into any new field of diplomacy. But he quitted not only diplomacy, but public life, at this period; and although he enjoyed the friendship of the best men in France, there is no doubt that he felt deep disappointment with the circumstances under which his public career closed.

'Lord Palmerston,' says Lord Dalling and Bulwer, 'told me that his (Talleyrand's) manner in

diplomatic conferences was remarkable for its extreme absence of pretension, without any derogation of authority. He sat for the most part quiet, as if approving; sometimes, however, stating his opinion, but never arguing or discussing: a habit foreign to the natural indolence which accompanied him throughout his active career, and which he also condemned on such occasions as fruitless and impolitic. "I argue before a public assembly," he used to say, "not because I hope to convince any one there, but because I wish my opinions to be known to the world. But in a room, beyond which my voice is not to extend, the attempt to enforce my opinion against that which another is engaged to adopt obliges him to be more formal and positive in expressing his hostility, and often leads him, from a desire to shine in the sense of his instructions, to go beyond them." Whatever M. de Talleyrand did, therefore, in the way of argument he usually did beforehand, and alone, with the parties whom he was afterwards to encounter, and here he tried to avoid controversy. His manner was to bring out the principal point in his own opinion, and present it to the best advantage in every possible position. Napoleon complained of this, saying he could not conceive how people found M. de Talleyrand eloquent. "Il tournait toujours sur la même idée." But this was a system with him, as with Fox, who laid it down as the great principle for an orator who wished to leave an impression.'

A personal sketch written of Talleyrand states that as regards the close of his existence the likenesses of him that are common are sufficiently resembling. His head, with a superfluity of hair, looked large, and was sunk deep into an

expanded chest. His countenance was pale and grave, with a mouth, the under-lip rather protruding, which formed itself instantly and almost instinctively into a smile that was sarcastic without being ill-natured. He talked little in general society, merely expressing at intervals some opinion that had the air of an epigram, and which produced its effect as much from the manner with which it was brought out as from its intrinsic merit. He was, in fact, an actor, but an actor with such ease and non-chalance that he never seemed more natural than when he was acting.'

Talleyrand was elected one of the Forty Immortals, and not long before his last illness appeared in the Tribune of the Institute to pronounce the eulogium upon M. Reinhard. There was one bond at least between the speaker and the deceased, namely, that both had received an ecclesiastical education. Talleyrand delivered a long and eloquent address on the occasion, and one distinguished for its breadth of view, as well as the personal interest attaching to it.

Picturesque descriptions have been left on record by Talleyrand of visits which he paid to Cagliostro, to Voltaire, and to the Countess de la Motte, of Diamond Necklace notoriety. With regard to the first named, the diplomatist's description is accompanied by a very remarkable instance of his powers of mesmerism, as exemplified in respect to one of Talleyrand's friends. The great magician himself, whom they found in his study, is thus depicted: 'Cagliostro was then a man in the very flower of his age, of exceedingly prepossessing appearance. His person, although small, was so well and firmly knit, that its proportions seemed those of a much larger man. His countenance was remarkably keen and

penetrating, being formed of a succession of sharp angular lines, which gave him a look of cunning that he would willingly have disguised, and with which the solemn tone and mysterious aspect were altogether at variance. His sharp piercing eyes I shall never forget; they absolutely seemed to light up the obscurity of the chamber, and as they flashed from the one to the other of his visitors, they seemed to belong to some wild bird of prey, hesitating between two victims which to devour first. His beard and eyebrows were black and bushy, with here and there a streak of gray amid their jetty blackness, telling more of the hand of woe than of the passage of time. When we entered, he had upon his head a velvet cap, which, with gentlemanlike courtesy, he doffed when he addressed us; and then I perceived that the summit of his crown was already bald, although his hair curled down upon his neck and shoulders in a thick and silky mass. The hand which rested upon the table, and upon which he seemed to be leaning his whole weight as he stood in graceful and theatrical attitude, awaiting our communication, was small and delicate as that of a lady of the Court, and shone out upon the dark green velvet as white as snow; and yet it needed not any very profound knowledge of anatomy to enable the beholder to discern at once that it was the hand of a man possessed of most herculean strength and power, so vigorous were the firm knit muscles, so well strung the tightened cord-like nerves.'

Voltaire having expressed a wish to become acquainted with M. de Talleyrand, the latter lost no time in calling upon 'the greatest genius of the age, the master-spirit of his own time.'

He found the celebrated philosopher in his house at the corner of the Rue de Beaune and the quai which has since been called by his name. His niece, Madame Denis, was in the room. M. de Voltaire was seated on the edge of his bed, attired in one of those short loose dressing-gowns much worn at that time, and which displayed his spindle legs and shrunken feet in all their unveiled ugliness. 'Never have I beheld a form so withered, so diminished; every vein in his whole frame was visible and defined, like those in an anatomical study. The later portraits of M. de Voltaire give a very just idea of his appearance, but they generally fail in expressing the singular look of the eyes—an expression which I have never seen in any one since that time—an anxious, unquiet, restless look; a hungry, thirsty, keenly-searching glance (hunger and thirst of praise), and searching with avidity for admiration, which, such was the Voltairian fever of the time, he never failed to obtain, and yet, as *l'appetit vient en mangeant*, never wholly satisfied his craving.' Of Voltaire's powers of speech Talleyrand says: 'I can safely affirm that M. de Voltaire spoke with even more ease and grace than distinguish his writings. I think he would have made a splendid orator. His words seemed to fly from his lips, so rapid, yet so neat, so distinct and clear was every expression.'

The visitor and the friend who accompanied him remained for more than an hour conversing with the great man of Ferney. Speaking of his farewell of Voltaire, Talleyrand observes, 'I looked at him long and earnestly as he shook me cordially by the hand, and bade me a most paternal farewell. Every line of that remarkable countenance is en-

graven on my memory. I see it now before me—the small fiery eyes, staring from the shrunken sockets, not unlike those of a chameleon; the dried and withered cheek traversed in every direction by deeply-cut lines; the compressed lips and puckered mouth, round which played a perpetual sarcastic smile, giving him altogether the air of a merry fiend. Every feature of that face is as present to my memory now as it was at that moment while I was gazing on it, impressed with a kind of sorrowful conviction that I should behold it no more.'

We now turn to a very different kind of picture. It is that of the Countess de la Motte, to whom Talleyrand was introduced on the same occasion upon which he was presented to the Princesse de Guéménée by the Prince Cardinal, Louis de Rohan. 'Madame de la Motte,' he says, 'was a small lively person, full of fire, and talking with a strong accent and active gesticulation. She was, without doubt, what in the world is called a pretty woman; for she had a fine complexion, with sparkling black eyes, and a superb range of ivory teeth, which she took every pains to display by an incessant twist of her lips, which I remember to this day as having produced the most unpleasant effect possible upon my nerves. She had a remarkable profusion of really fine chestnut hair, which was but half powdered, and clustered in most bewitching ringlets round her face. Her age might have been about seven or eight and twenty—the very age most to be dreaded in woman; the mind possessing all the experience of maturity, the person yet retaining all the bloom and charm of youth. Her attire was well chosen to set off her complexion; but it shocked my taste to witness the profusion

of ornament and jewels with which she was adorned, even while speaking of herself as a *pauvre sollicitueuse*, to whom a miserly government would only accord a beggarly pension of eight hundred livres. Her diamonds, indeed, rivalled, both in beauty and profusion, those of the Princesse de Guéménée herself, and her dress consisted of a robe of orange-coloured brocatelle, shot with black and flowered with gold. Her hands and arms were hidden by long gloves of Spanish kid; and I could readily imagine that there was coquetry in this precaution, as the hardships in which her early years had been spent must, of necessity, have left their traces *there*.'

In our previous article we gave a number of examples illustrating Prince Talleyrand's wit; and we now supplement them by a few of his maxims for seasoning conversation, which it will be seen are flavoured by his peculiar philosophy:

'Unbounded modesty is nothing more than unavowed vanity: the too humble obeisance is sometimes a disguised impertinence.

'The reputation of a man is like his shadow—gigantic when it precedes him, and pigmy in its proportions when it follows.

'More evil truths are discovered by the corruption of the heart than by the penetration of the mind.

'The rich man despises those who flatter him too much, and hates those who do not flatter him at all.

'The imagination of men is often the refuge of their prejudices.

'That sovereign has a little mind who seeks to go down to posterity by means of great public buildings. It is to confide to masons and bricklayers the task of writing history.

'The love of glory can only create a hero: the contempt of it creates a great man.

'The errors of great men and the good deeds of reprobates should not be reckoned in our estimates of their respective characters.

'Theologians resemble dogs, which gnaw large bones for the sake of a very little meat.

'Both erudition and agriculture ought to be encouraged by Government; wit and manufactures will come of themselves.

'Too much sensibility creates unhappiness; too much insensibility creates crime.

'What I have been taught, I have forgotten; what I know, I have guessed.

'Certain acts can be rendered legal, but can never be made legitimate.

'Life to a young man is like a new acquaintance, of whom he grows disgusted as he advances in years.

'In love we grow acquainted because we are already attached; in friendship we must know each other before we love.

'A generous man will place the benefits he confers beneath his feet, those he receives nearest his heart.

'A narrow-minded man can never possess real and true generosity; he can never go beyond mere benevolence.

'If you wish to appear agreeable in society, you must consent to be taught many things which you know already.

'There are many vices which do not deprive us of friends; there are many virtues which prevent our having any.

'I remember having been often told in my youth that the love of glory was a virtue. Strange must be that virtue which requires the aid of every vice!

'There are two things to which we never grow accustomed—the ravages of time and the injustice of our fellow-men.

'We must learn to submit with grace to commit the follies which depend upon character.

'To succeed in the world, it is much more necessary to possess the penetration to discover who is a fool, than to discover who is a clever man.'

Prince Talleyrand died on the 17th of May 1838, in the Rue de Florentin, Paris, in his eighty-fourth year. The first symptoms of the complaint which carried him off appeared only six days before his death, when he was seized with a shivering fit, attended by repeated vomitings. He underwent an operation at the lower part of the loins with great fortitude. He was quite aware of his danger. Having asked his medical men if they thought they could cure him, they rightly estimated his strength of mind, and told him at once that he ought to put his affairs in order, that he might have nothing to do but to attend to his health. It was said that some time before he had written and addressed to the Pope a retraction of the part which he took in the constitutional mass celebrated on the day of the Federation in the Champ de Mars; and this, with a copy, was enclosed by him to the Archbishop of Paris, who, however, did not visit the Prince. He received the sacrament of extreme unction from the hands of the Abbé Dupanloup just before he expired.

A graphic account of Talleyrand's last moments was written by an eye-witness; and from this narrative we reproduce the most interesting passages:

'When I entered the chamber,' he observed, 'where reposed the veteran statesman, he had fallen into

a profound slumber, from which some amendment was augured by his physicians. The slumber, or rather lethargy, had continued for about an hour after my arrival, when it became curious to observe the uneasiness which was manifested as time drew on, even by those dearest and nearest, lest this repose, however salutary, should endure beyond the hour fixed for the King's visit; for the sovereign intended to pay M. de Talleyrand this last homage. With some difficulty he was at last aroused, and made to comprehend the approaching ceremony; and hardly was he lifted from his reclining position and placed at the edge of the bed when Louis Philippe, accompanied by Madame Adelaide, entered the apartment. "I am sorry, Prince, to see you suffering so much," said the King, in a low tremulous voice, rendered almost inaudible by apparent emotion. "Sire, you have come to witness the sufferings of a dying man; and those who love him can have but one wish—that of seeing them shortly at an end."

'The royal visit, like all royal visits of a disagreeable nature, was of the shortest possible duration. Indeed, the position was to all parties embarrassing and painful. Louis Philippe rose, after an effort and some few words of consolation, to take his leave; and not even at this last moment did the old Prince lose his wonted presence of mind or forget a duty which the etiquette he had been bred in dictated—that of introducing those formally to the sovereign who found themselves in his presence. Slightly raising himself, then, he mentioned by name his physician, his secretary, his principal valet, and his own private doctor; and then he observed slowly: "Sire, our house has received this day an honour

worthy to be inscribed in our annals, and which my successors will remember with pride and gratitude." It was shortly afterwards that the first symptoms of dissolution were observed, and a few persons were then admitted to his chamber; but the adjoining room was crowded, and exhibited a strange scene for a room so near the bed of death.

'The flower of the society of Paris was there. On one side old and young politicians, gray-headed statesmen, were gathered round the blazing fire, and engaged in eager conversation; on another was to be seen a younger coterie, of gentlemen and ladies, whose side-long looks and low pleasant whispers formed a sad contrast to the dying groans of the neighbouring sufferer.

'Presently the conversation stopped; the hum of voices was at an end. There was a solemn pause, and every eye turned towards the slowly opening door of the Prince's chamber. A domestic entered, with downcast looks and swollen eyes, and advancing to Dr. C——, whispered a few words in his ear. He arose instantly and entered the Prince's chamber. The natural precipitation with which this movement was executed but too plainly revealed its cause. There was an instantaneous rush to the door of the apartment, within which M. de Talleyrand was seated on the side of his bed, supported in the arms of his secretary. It was evident that Death had set his seal upon that marble brow; yet I was struck with the still existing vigour of his countenance. It seemed as if all the life which had once sufficed to furnish the whole being was now contained in the brain. From time to time he raised up his head, throwing back with a sudden movement

the long gray locks which impeded his sight, and gazed around; and then, as if satisfied with the result of his examination, a smile would pass across his features, and his head would again fall upon his bosom. He saw the approach of death without shrinking or fear, and also without any affectation of scorn or defiance.

'If there be truth in the assertion that it is satisfactory to die amidst friends and relations, then, indeed, must his last feeling towards the world he was for ever quitting have been one of entire approbation and content; for he expired amidst regal pomp and reverence; and of all those whom he, perhaps, would have called together, none were wanting. The friend of his maturity, the fair young idol of his age, were gathered on bended knee beside his bed; and if the words of comfort whispered by the murmuring priest failed to reach his ear, it was because the sound was stifled by the wailings of those he had loved so well. Scarcely, however, had those eyes, whose every glance had been watched so long, and with such deep interest, for ever closed, when a sudden change came over the scene.

'One would have thought that a flight of crows had suddenly taken wing, so great was the precipitation with which each one hurried from the hotel, in the hope of being first to spread the news amongst the particular set or coterie of which he or she happened to be the oracle. Ere nightfall, that chamber, which all the day had been crowded to excess, was abandoned to the servants of the tomb; and when I entered in the evening, I found the very armchair, whence I had so often heard the Prince launch the courtly jest or stinging epigram, occupied by a hired priest,

whispering prayers for the repose of the departed soul.'

M. de Talleyrand was buried at Valençay, according to his own express instructions, and in the chapel of the Sisters of St. André, which he had himself founded. The funeral took place on the 22d of May, and it was conducted with considerable pomp. An imposing detachment of horse chasseurs opened the procession, and this was followed by the bands of several regiments of the garrison, playing funeral airs. The hearse next appeared, amidst a double row of soldiers, extending along the streets of St. Florentin and St. Honoré from the hotel of the Prince to the church of the Assumption. At the four corners of the hearse walked Marshal Soult, Count Molé, Chancellor Pasquier, and the Duke de Broglie; and immediately afterwards came the clergy, the ministers, the corps diplomatique, peers, deputies, members of the Institute, and the civil and military authorities, all dressed in their state costumes and walking uncovered; the relations and friends of the Prince, &c. Most of the King's household attended. At the place of interment, after the religious ceremony had concluded, the body was taken down into a vault. The church was then cleared and given in charge to the *sergens de ville*, who were ordered not to admit any one until the funeral decorations had been all removed.

The chief bequests made under the will of Prince Talleyrand were as follows: the hotel in Rue St. Florentin and an estate in the country went to the daughter of the Duchesse de Dino, niece of the Prince; the great estate at Valençay, which the Prince had purchased for 2,500,000 francs a considerable time before, and which was said to be worth

8,000,000 francs, to the Duc de Valençay, son of the Duchesse de Dino; a sum of 800,000 francs to the Comtesse de Talleyrand, wife of the Comte Alexander de Talleyrand, Minister Plenipotentiary at Copenhagen. The Prince had, some years before his death, insured a sum of 500,000 francs to the Duchesse d'Esclignac, daughter of his brother, Count Bozon de Périgord. 'If Prince Talleyrand,' remarked the *Journal de Paris*, 'had many political enemies, he had not a few private friends. Amongst the number of those who most regret him is the excellent Viscountess de Laval, mother of the late Duke Mathieu de Montmorency; it was in this lady's house that the Prince passed most of his evenings. Their intimacy had stood the test of the shock of political opinions and of some very warm discussions, without having once altered their friendship during half a century.'

Talleyrand was unquestionably a man of great and original powers of mind; and he was called upon to exercise these faculties under circumstances as extraordinary, perhaps, as any which have ever fallen to the lot of a human being to encounter. The use he made of those faculties cannot, on all occasions, be defended. One English apologist, referring to the various political parts he played, observes: 'One is daily seeing changes so extraordinary and so rapid amongst the most respectable public men of our own day, and even of our own country, that it would be absurd not to acknowledge that, when years run rapidly through changing events, we must expect to find those whose career is embarked on so unsteady a current uncertain and variable in their opinions. The stiff consistent character is of the Middle

Ages.' Talleyrand himself said in the sequel to his will, from which we have already quoted, and replying to those who reproached him for having served successively all governments, that he had done so without the least scruple, being guided by the idea that, in whatever situation the country might be, there were always means of doing it some good, and that to do this good was the business of a statesman.

Undoubtedly there is some force in the remarks both of the Prince and his apologist. In the age in which Talleyrand lived, France was preëminently distinguished for change and upheaval; and a statesman must sometimes know how to bend in dealing with important crises. But there is all the difference between a man

made of cast iron and one suggestive of the organisation of the jelly-fish. We expect to be able to hold a man some time, and somewhere, to definite principles; but Talleyrand was never to be had thus. Some changes we should naturally expect to find in a statesman; but here was one who was constantly changing, and who was always ready to do work which properly belonged to other men. He outstripped the chameleon in the rapidity with which he changed his colours. Granted he did this with all the ability of a consummate diplomatist; but it is nevertheless confusing and humiliating to find so great an historical figure wearing, in the course of his career, an unparalleled assortment of state uniforms.

THE SENIOR PARTNER.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL, AUTHOR OF 'GEORGE GEITH,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ROBERT'S WIFE.

WHEN they entered, she was sitting on a low chair before the fire. For a moment she looked round listlessly; then, without speaking, she turned her gaze from them towards the smouldering embers once more.

Her features were pinched and drawn; her cheeks white and sunken; her black dress literally hung upon her wasted figure. Mr. McCullagh glanced at Alfred Mostin in despairing interrogation, but meeting with no response, drew a chair close beside his daughter-in-law, and would have taken her hand had she not drawn it slowly away.

'I'm sorry to see ye not looking very well, Jean,' he began. 'Have ye been ill?'

'No, I have not been ill.'

'What's the matter? have ye heard bad news of Robert?'

She shook her head.

'What is it, then? Tell me; maybe I can help ye.'

She did not answer; she only covered her face with her hands and rocked herself backwards and forwards.

'Janey,' broke in Mr. Mostin at this juncture, 'shall I let him know what has happened?'

Mr. McCullagh waited breathlessly; and then through the room there rang out an exceeding bitter cry:

'O, my child, my child, my child!'

'Her child was buried yester-

day,' explained Mr. Mostin, and he turned his head aside.

'Which o' them? for the Lord's sake, which?'

'Annie, Annie; my little Annie!' and as if some barrier had suddenly been broken down, the bereaved mother burst into passionate and uncontrollable weeping.

'That is better,' said Alfred Mostin huskily. 'I have been wanting her to cry. Ever since the little one died she has not shed a tear till now.'

There ensued a silence broken only by Janey's convulsive sobbing. Twice Mr. McCullagh timidly stretched out his hand to lay it on her shoulder, and twice he drew it back, appalled by the extremity of her grief. He opened his mouth to speak, but closed it again for lack of any word that should seem other than a mockery of her anguish.

'You have seen what you asked to see; you have heard what you wanted to know'—it was Alfred Mostin who said this, addressing Mr. McCullagh: 'as there is nothing you can do here, don't you think you had better go back to Basinghall-street?'

'If I could be any comfort,' hesitated Robert's father.

'That is precisely what you cannot be. Come, Mr. McCullagh, you had better let well alone. The sight of you has broken the ice, and that is more than I expected. Leave her to mourn her child as she was left to bear other burdens—alone.'

Mr. Alfred Mostin had not a

pleasant way of putting things, but there was such an undeniable amount of sense in his suggestion that Mr. McCullagh rose, and saying, 'Good-bye just now, Jean; I'll soon be seeing ye again,' rose and left the room.

When he reached the foot of the stairs he turned to Mr. Mostin, and asked if there was any place where he could speak to him. For answer, that gentleman unceremoniously pushed open the door of a small parlour, which chanced at that moment to be empty, and, thrusting his hands deep in his pockets, said gloomily,

'Now, what is it?'

Mr. McCullagh looked up at him with an air both of surprise and doubt, but, making no comment upon the strangeness of his manner, asked,

'Will ye tell me what it was wee Annie died of?'

'Fever,' was the laconic answer.

'You don't mean—'

'Yes, I do; the mother came back too soon, and the child caught it. She got better of the fever, but she had not strength to live. She lingered a while, and died on Sunday.'

'Why wasn't I told?'

'Why should you have been told, when, in a civil sort of way, your sons showed Robert's wife the sooner she left your house the better; when night and day your own tongue never ceased reviling the woman who was spending her health, jeopardising her life for *you*? This minute you would not be standing opposite to me, if she had not gone to you when no relation or friend but fled from your side in terror. Long before now your sons would have been wrangling over the money they implied *she* wanted, if Robert's wife had not nursed and tended you as a mother might her infant.'

Like one suddenly stricken Mr. McCullagh stood dumb.

'She has been cruelly, mercilessly used among you,' went on Alfred Mostin in his passion, careless of how hard he hit. 'It was a black day for her that on which she first saw your son, and a blacker when she married into a family that, having neither nobility of nature nor generosity of heart, cannot understand the possession of such traits in anybody else. It has all fallen out as I expected. I advised her to have nothing to do with any one of you; and now you have broken her heart and killed her child, and—'

'Stop!' said Mr. McCullagh, and there was pathos and even dignity in his trembling voice and uplifted right hand. 'If I have been wrong, I am not answerable to you; if I have erred, it is not to you I must humble myself. Wait here for me a minute; don't come between us till I have said my say.'

'All right,' agreed Mr. Mostin: 'if you can say anything to undo what you have done, I'll wait here for a week.'

With his noiseless gliding step Mr. McCullagh walked to the door: when he reached it he turned, and, looking steadily at his enemy, said, 'I'm obliged to ye,' and walked straight up-stairs.

His daughter-in-law was still seated before the fire, but, in the abandonment of her grief, she had flung one arm over the back of her chair, and, with weary, weary head resting against her shoulder, was sobbing as though her very heart would break.

There was no hesitation or incertitude about Mr. McCullagh now. Crossing the room, he took up his position beside the chimney-piece, and began,

'Jean, lift up your face for a minute.'

She did not answer verbally, only shook her head in dissent.

'I want to speak to ye; I have something I must say.'

She made a dumb gesture, signifying she could hear, though she was unable to check her sobs.

'Do ye mind when your mother was taken ill?'

Her head moved slightly.

'She was a good mother, and a kind, I make small doubt; anyhow she was fond of ye.'

As the wind brings sometimes a torrent of rain, so this appeal to a fresh emotion produced a gust of fiercer weeping.

'And I want to ask ye, as a reasonable woman, which I don't think ye are in a state to be considered at this minute, if, after—after she—that is, I mean when she wasn't altogether what she once had been—she had said things ye thought a trifle unfair and cruel, would ye have judged them the utterances of her natural mind, or thought to yourself, "It is the disease as is talking, not my mother"?''

There was a lull for an instant; then Janey, burying her face more resolutely, wept tears that seemed wrung from the very depths of her soul.

'Well, and though I am not your mother,' proceeded Mr. McCullagh after a slight pause, 'I ask ye to judge me no harder than ye would her. If, when I was sick, I said bitter things about ye—and I'm told I did—it was not me, but the fever. I don't believe any of the poor creatures mentioned in the Scriptures were ever possessed by worse devils than those that tore and tortured me. It was they spoke, Jeanie, not your husband's father, that ye watched beside like an angel from heaven; on my soul and conscience it was they! Look up, Jeanie, look up; and for the Lord's sake say

ye know I am not telling ye a lee.'

She did look up; she lifted a face changed with weeping, stained with tears, and she said something, in a broken gasping whisper, he made out to be he had always hated her, and it was hard, hard, for she had from the very first wanted to be friends with him.

'And if I was wrong once, ay, if I was wrong for years—and I freely confess I was—is that any reason I should go on being wrong for ever? If ye'll let me be your friend now, I'll try to make atonement; there's my hand on it. What, ye won't take it? and yet many's the night, when I lay swinging out into eternity, I felt your hand laid on mine, and knew there was virtue in it.'

'But you would not speak to—her! Do you remember that morning in Guildford-street, when she had on her pretty new bonnet, and—'

She could not go on; again she hid her face, and her tears flowed like water.

'I do mind,' he said, and he also kept silence.

'Jean'—it was a few seconds before he spoke again, and then a suspicious tremor shook his voice—'Jean, did she want for any single thing?'

'No; I'd have gone out and begged sooner.'

'If I'd known—if I had but known! Woman, woman, why didn't ye send to me? money might have saved her.'

'Nothing could have saved her, after—once I—had—brought—home—death—to her—as I might—a toy.'

'God help ye, Jean! God help us both, for that matter!'

There ensued a long pause, during which Janey wept quietly, and Mr. McCullagh stood looking

mournfully upon a sorrow he was impotent to soothe.

'Ye'll do yourself a hurt, I am much afraid,' he said at last. 'Try not to take on as you're doing. Think of your husband—of Robert, ye mind.'

He could not have offered any suggestion less likely to comfort her. In a torrent her grief again broke bounds; in an agony she moaned and rocked herself backwards and forwards.

'And O,' this was the burden of that wailing lament, 'when he comes back and asks me for his little Annie, what am I to tell him?'

'Tell him,' answered Mr. McCullagh, 'that she is gone to One who will take better care of her than ever we could. Don't greet like that; it just rends my heart. Is there nothing will comfort ye? Ailfred, Ailfred,' he cried, running out on the landing, 'come up and see if ye can do anything with her. Can't ye think of some word to ease her grief?'

'Yes,' said Mr. Mostin, 'I know now what to say. If you go, I will talk to her.'

'Ye'll no try to set her against me, Ailfred,' pleaded Mr. McCullagh, standing at the 'stair-head.'

'I will not try to set her against you,' answered Mr. Mostin. To judge from the expression of his face, he was going to add some disagreeable reason for this promised abstinence, but he refrained.

'I think I'll wait below till I hear how she is,' suggested Mr. McCullagh.

'No, don't do that; if you like, I will call round this evening and let you know.'

'I would take it very kind of ye,' said Mr. McCullagh meekly; and he added subsequently, though not then, he had also taken it very kind of Ailfred to run down the stair after him and call the cabman, who was waiting a little

distance off, and help him into the vehicle and bang the door, telling him at the same time not to be fretting about Janey.

'She will do now,' finished the ne'er-do-weel. 'I'll see to her.'

As the cab rattled down the City-road, deep and bitter were the thoughts which coursed through the mind of the man who had stood, not two months previously, knocking at the very door of death.

The loss of the child, his son's only daughter; the memory of that sunny morning in Guildford-street, when, framed in the 'pretty new bonnet,' he saw the 'bonnie wee face' and passed it by; the mother's wild grief, 'the like of which he had never witnessed before;' the 'lady way she had with her' even in the midst of her trouble; the words Alfred Mostin had spoken—each one of these things, and fifty more that came crowding upon his memory, pierced his heart like the stab of a dagger. His sons and his sons' wives, and even Mr. and Mrs. Nicol, had seemed right glad to welcome him back to life and health. He could not think—it would be wicked for him to think—anybody in the wide world would have been wishful for him to die; but still, if he had died—if he had—they would have got over it by now, as he himself might the death of another; and they would have been parting his money and considering about carrying on the business; and rich as he was, well as he stood in the City, highly as he knew himself to be respected, the waters of oblivion would have closed over him long before they lay still and waveless above the memory of a 'bit child whose father was a bankrupt, and whose grandmother had been little better nor a madwoman.'

'And not one of them would

have "let on" to me about Jean, if they could have helped it. They pretended not to know who I was talking about when I spoke of the woman with the quiet ways and the soft kind hands; and if it had not been for my own for-by power o' memory, and Mr. Roy, whom they cautioned not to say a word about her, for fear I might be vexed, I'd have gone to my grave the next time without even a chance of thanking her for saving me from it this. I'll no say they were altogether to blame, for it's their nature; but where do they get it? The mother was just one separate in the way of thinking of herself, to be sure; but the old man, though he couldn't keep two sixpences in his pocket, had kind ways with him. And Robert wasn't so bad-hearted either; and Ailfred, if he did not drink and could see the beauty and holiness of commercial honesty, is a man something might be made of; he has been good to Robert's wife, and he was not bad to me. I never thought to be beholden to him for lifting me about on a sick-bed. Where do they get it? reverting to the question of the mercenary disposition of his other children. 'I wonder if it's from me? Maybe they've inherited the hard bit without the soft tender spot auld Rab knows is in him.'

As delicately as he could, the same evening he insinuated this question to Alfred Mostin over a 'tumbler'; but Mr. Mostin, though drinking at his host's expense the very best 'Scotch' that ever came across the Border, was in no mood for complimentary or diplomatic utterances. He felt very angry about the way Robert's wife had been treated, and his grief for the death of the child was keen and new. He refused utterly to say a good word for any one of the Basinghall-street faction.

'If you want that,' he said, 'you must go to the woman they sent out to carry the infection of your illness home. I have not the gifts of charity and forgiveness, but she has. She could find some merit even in Kenneth, I've no doubt.'

'I have been considering,' ventured Mr. McCullagh, after the pause which succeeded this utterance, 'that I'd like her weel to come and stop here with the children—altogether, ye understand. D'ye think she'd do it?'

'Not just now. Give her time, and she might.'

'Would ye sound her on the matter?'

'No; you had better speak yourself.'

'Ye wouldn't stop her, would ye, Ailfred? I can see she sets great store by what ye say.'

'You may be sure I won't stop her doing any one thing that is for her good.'

'And ye think what I propose would be?'

'I am sure of it.'

'When would ye have me ask her?'

'I will tell you after a while.'

'Don't let it be too long first.'

'No longer than seems wise;' spite of which assurance, weeks passed and he made no sign. To all Mr. McCullagh's remonstrances he returned short and evasive answers, and that gentleman was thinking seriously of taking the matter into his own hands, and relying solely on his own judgment, as 'I ought to have done from the first,' when one day Alfred met him at the door of Janey's lodgings, and said,

'You can ask her now, if you like.'

An opportunity soon presented itself. Janey, calm and restored to something vaguely resembling the woman who had that morning,

which seemed so long and long before, met David McCullagh at the corner of London Wall, was saying next time Mr. McCullagh came he would most probably see the boys.

'I mean to have them home at last,' she added. 'I am sure I shall never know how to thank Mrs. Mostin sufficiently for having taken charge of them at her house for such a time.'

'But ye're never surely going to bring them back here!' exclaimed Mr. McCullagh.

'Why not?' she asked. 'There is not the slightest danger now; and I could not get such a cheap place, perhaps, anywhere else. Besides—'

'Besides what?' inquired Mr. McCullagh.

'The mistress of the house was always so good to Annie, and so kind to me when—I lost her.'

Then outspoke Mr. McCullagh:

'I tell ye, Jean, what I've had in my mind for weeks past, only Ailfred there told me it was no use asking ye till the first of the fret was over. Come to me. There's a big house standing empty; there's fine playroom there for the children, and they'll not be in anybody's way. I'll be real glad to have ye all. Will ye come? Will ye forgive and forget, and be friends with an old man, who isn't too proud to own he was wrong? She's looking at you, Ailfred; for once speak up in my favour.'

Janey turned to Mr. McCullagh as he uttered the last sentence, and then again to Alfred, wistfully.

'What do you say?' she asked.

'That you ought to accept Mr. McCullagh's offer, as freely as it is made. While Robert is away, the best place for you and the children is his father's house.'

'Weel said, Ailfred; that's

right weel spoken!' cried Mr. McCullagh, with exultation.

She put out her hand shyly, yet trustfully, as she said,

'If I go to your house, you won't misunderstand me again?'

'Never, Jean, never; ye may rely on that;' and he pressed her hand between both of his.

She stooped down and kissed his left, which lay uppermost.

'Hoots, girl!' exclaimed Mr. McCullagh, scandalised, 'don't kiss my hand! It is a pairfect waste of a good thing.'

Alfred Mostin burst out laughing. If his life had depended upon his gravity, he could not have done otherwise. That laugh settled the matter; it was like sunshine after rain, brightness after gloom.

In five minutes everything was arranged, and by him. The boys should not return to the Lower-road. He himself would bring them to Basinghall-street. If Mr. McCullagh liked, he could fetch Janey.

Mr. McCullagh thought he would like to fetch her very much, and anxiously inquired when he might do so. There ensued a little talk and hesitation; but finally the day but one following was decided on.

'I would rather not come till the evening,' said Janey; 'and then I can get the children soon off to bed.'

'Well, so long as ye come, have it your own way,' agreed Mr. McCullagh. 'Name the time, and I'll be here punctual.'

'Six, then,' she answered promptly; and accordingly at six on the day appointed she bade her landlady good-bye, stepped into a cab, and, accompanied by her father-in-law, drove off to her new home.

'Ye know where everything is in the house, Jean, I think,' said

Mr. McCullagh; 'and if ye find aught wanting, ask for it.' Then, to be 'out of the road,' he bade her good-night; and, walking into his own room, left her with Alfred Mostin and the boys.

CHAPTER XL.

CONCLUSION.

It was not without some misgivings that the next morning Mr. McCullagh ascended to the common sitting-room. He had done what he considered a mere act of right and justice. To Janey he knew he owed his life, and he was quite prepared to do what he could for her in return. Nevertheless it would be idle to deny that he looked forward with dread to the presence at meals of three well-grown healthy lads. By bitter experience he knew what the breakfast-table at Mrs. Kenneth's resembled; and felt little doubt that, though a 'beyond the common' sensible woman, Mrs. Robert would be as 'great a fool' about her young ones as the wife of his second son.

To his amazement, however, he found no 'young ones' present; and his glance wandering to the table, he saw the cloth was laid only for two.

'Where are the children?' he asked, not even answering his daughter-in-law's 'good-morning.'

'They had their breakfast an hour ago,' she answered. 'Your life,' she went on, smiling, 'shall not be made a weariness by them. If they often tire me out, who am their mother, what would their constant presence be to you?'

'O, they wouldn't hurt me,' answered Mr. McCullagh; but still he sat down to table relieved. Never had his rasher tasted better, or his tea been 'more to his

mind.' Things were beginning well, he thought. If only Janey had not been dressed in black, and her face white and peaky! But she tried her best, poor soul; she strove hard to remember that though little Annie was with her mother no longer on earth, she had gone to a Father in heaven, who, though all Mystery, is all Love; and in work, hard constant work, she soon began to find that comfort God intended it should bring to the loneliest man or woman He ever saw fit to visit with all His storms.

In the telling, all this may seem a poor and pitiful record, yet it is really the story of a grand and beautiful life. Small things added up make a great total. At the end even of one short week, looking round upon the changes effected in his life, Mr. McCullagh wondered he had been able to live so long without a woman who, spite of her sad face, seemed to bring sunshine with her.

From out her boxes she produced first one thing and then another, which changed utterly, yet by almost imperceptible degrees, the aspect of that dreary sitting-room. She did not trouble Mr. McCullagh as to what he liked or disliked; yet by some curious chance, as he at first thought it, each day saw upon his table the special dish for which he had a fancy. His linen was laid out, a delicate attention which even Janet had not affected; his slippers were put to warm; there was a hole in the pocket of his office-coat he had meant to ask her to get mended, but when he next thrust his hands into its depths it had been repaired; the children were kept out of his way; the kettle and 'materials' each evening were placed in his room.

In the midst of this silent consideration, Mr. McCullagh stood

like one dazed. He could not quite understand it at first. Never in all his life before had he been so treated. His wife had neglected him altogether; and Janet, when she did attend to his wants, did so with a flourish of trumpets which sometimes almost made him wish she would leave him alone.

'I'm thinking I'll have to pay for it all, though, and sharp,' thought Mr. McCullagh; and he looked forward to Monday morning with a feeling both of curiosity and dread.

Since Janet's departure he had not catered much for the house himself, little catering, indeed, being required; but at the end of each seven days the 'books' were brought to him for checking and settlement, and woe betide the baker who was out a farthing in his addition or the milkman who unrighteously charged for an extra halfpennyworth of milk!

Now, however, he was prepared to see wonders, and he did. The total of the housekeeping did not exceed the usual moderate amount. 'What the deil!' exclaimed Mr. McCullagh to himself; but he said nothing that week; he waited to see what would happen next.

The same thing occurred again; and then all in a hurry he sought Janey, and asked her what she was doing, how the children, to say nothing of herself, were being fed.

'Why,' she answered, with a swift colour mantling in her cheeks, 'as you were so very good as to let us stay in this dear old house—and, O, you can't think how pleasant it is for us to be here after those close lodgings—I am not going to encroach on your kindness. I am quite rich, now I have not to pay each week for our rooms.'

'Now, just mind this,' he said. 'Never you do a thing like that

again while the same roof covers us. I'm no so within a pound or two that I need grudge my grandchildren bite and sup. I didn't ask ye here to let ye board yourselves, and I'm sore vexed ye should have done it.'

They had a little talk and argument after this; but it ended in Mr. McCullagh having his own way.

'Best take the house while ye're in it,' he said recklessly, 'and do the best ye can with it; I'm no uneasy that ye'll ruin me. But three healthy children can't be brought up for nothing; though, indeed, I do think it would be worth your while to try and get them to eat porridge of a morning. It is the finest food out for young ones to grow fat and strong on.'

'They have porridge,' answered Janey, 'every morning of their lives.'

And so the days slipped by, and Mr. McCullagh, watching that quiet figure flitting about the house, careful, busy, thoughtful, could but wonder at his own former blindness, and feel thankful the mists of prejudice had at length cleared away, and he could see his son's wife as she really was.

No woman who had not been genuinely and utterly unselfish could have effected the total though silent revolution Janey did within a very few months, not only in Mr. McCullagh's house, but in Mr. McCullagh himself.

The economy was as close as ever; but it had changed its character. No longer sordid and mean, it merely told of some one at the head of affairs anxious to do the strictest duty by the man who had befriended her, who, even if she thought—and she often did think—his ideas narrow and his mania for saving unnecessary, still felt that in another

person's house she was bound to forget her own notions and consider his.

With all his faults, Mr. McCullagh was a man on whom consideration had never been thrown away, and not to be behindhand with his daughter-in-law in generosity, he would occasionally amaze her with, 'If ye don't like the tea brewing so long, make it your way, Jeanie;' or 'Ye haven't been used to such poor fires, and your health is none of the best; never mind a lump or two. Wait, I'll do it to my own notion. I daresay when the end of the year comes, the extra cost won't break me.' 'I'm thinking I'll no call ye Jean any more, but Brownie.'

'Why Brownie?' asked Janey.

'Ye know what a brownie is? Well, ye remember they do everything about a house, and are never seen doing it: that's your way. I'm sure I never credited a woman could get through as much and make as little work about it.'

That Mr. McCullagh's reconciliation to his eldest son's wife should cause a great commotion amongst the rest of the connection is a matter which goes almost without saying.

'She has got on the blind side of the old man at last,' observed Kenneth bitterly.

'She knows the length of his foot,' remarked Mrs. Nicol. 'I'd never have believed he could have let himself be taken in by such as she; but it's no concern of mine, thank goodness! Maybe he'll find her out, after all.'

So amongst the whole of the clan, chatter concerning Janey ran round. If she had known what was said, it might have cost her some tears; but, for the matter of that, if any one of us heard even the one half of the evil our dearest friends speak about us, life would scarce be bearable.

'I wonder, I just do,' observed Mrs. Kenneth, 'that you let papa call you Jean.'

'Why should he not?' asked Mrs. Robert, in some surprise.

'It's so low: it sounds like as if you were some poor girl out of a cabin.'

'I love the name,' answered Janey quietly; and, indeed, she had cause to do so; for it sounded like sweet music in her ears to hear her father-in-law calling 'Jean, Jeanie,' over the house.

'Where's Jean?' 'I want a word wi' ye, Jeanie.'

He did not now remain shut up in his own room in the evenings. He read his paper and drank his toddy in the apartment that once looked so cold and cheerless; while Janey's busy fingers shaped some garment for the children, or swiftly stitched away at a piece of needful household work. It was a sort of companionship grateful beyond belief to a man of Mr. McCullagh's temperament. She was society, yet he need not talk to her if he did not feel inclined. He felt free to speak or to remain silent; and when he lifted his eyes, and looked across at her, she met his gaze with an ever-ready smile, or some little word that, though it broke the stillness, did not disturb the repose.

But still there were things about Robert's wife that did not quite satisfy Robert's father. In his own way, Mr. McCullagh was a martyr to a spirit of insatiable curiosity; and if ever he took what he called 'a conceit into his head,' he knew no rest till by hook or by crook he got it out again.

Now when he asked Janey to bring the children to Basinghall-street, he did it under the firm impression she was 'next door to starving;' that 'whatever amount of money Robert had managed to

leave behind him was running dry ;' and that if he did not take pity on her, she and hers would have to come on the parish.

It may accordingly be imagined that when he found she was 'no without a sixpence,' he felt greatly exercised in his mind.

Robert must have had money laid by. Somehow they had managed to make a purse. Of course she might not, and would not, think him to blame for considering her and the children ; but Mr. McCullagh had his doubts that he ought not to have done it. He would have thought better of them both if they had done a 'bit of starving.' And then another thing—where did Robert get what took him to America ?

He pondered these questions till he worked himself into a most uncomfortable frame of mind ; and though he might at once have relieved himself by putting the direct question to Janey, he preferred beating about the bush, and produced in consequence such an amount of mystification, that it was at length only by the purest chance she came to understand he happened to be unacquainted with the source whence her income was derived.

'I thought you knew,' she said, looking up at him with the greatest surprise. 'Mr. Lilands made some arrangements with an insurance company, that at poor mamma's death the amount of her annuity should be continued to me. We had no other money whatever, not a sixpence in the world.'

Upon this information, Mr. McCullagh for a time rested content ; but as the months went by, he began to ask himself why 'Jean, who had no pleasure in saving for saving's sake,' never would buy herself even a new pair of gloves if she could help it? why she was not a 'bit free'

bringing the children in toys and cakes ?

She had told him that Mr. Lilands' solicitor paid the costs of her mother's last illness and funeral, 'so they oughtn't to be in debt, because I settled for poor little Annie's burying.' He could not make it out. If Robert was sending home any money, he never heard of it ; and yet it was not like him not to think of his wife and children.

He pondered over the problem till he felt he must solve it by some means ; and so one evening, after Janey had been with him nearly a year, when the children were in bed, and the servant too, he said,

'I'm thinking, Jean, I'll have to buy ye a new dress.'

'Why?' asked Janey.

'Because it seems to me ye'll no buy one for yourself. Ye're mighty stingy,' he went on, trying to smile as if he were making some agreeable observation, 'about what most women will stretch a pound or two concerning. How is it—I don't want to be inquisitive, I'm sure, but still I wish you would tell me—the way it comes about that ye can't make your income, which is no so bad at all, go further ?'

She did not answer him for a minute, only stitched on in silence. As he looked at her he saw tears were falling on her work.

'If it hurts ye—' he was beginning, but she interrupted him.

'It is scarcely my own matter, but I do not see why I should not tell you. When Robert went away we had no money at all—not even enough to pay his passage—and Mr. Snow lent him some ; and we agreed that it should be paid back out of what I could save ; and I am trying to get rid of that debt. And then I want to hoard up a little more if

possible, so that when Robert sends for us I may not have to ask him for what perhaps he might be ill able to spare.'

'O,' said Mr. McCullagh, 'that's your plan, is it?'

'Yes; when he went away I promised—or at least he knew—that if my mother did not want me any longer I and the children would go to America when he could have us.'

'I see; and so the minute the young man whistles ye'll leave the old one.'

'I shall be very sorry to go, believe me—far more sorry than I ever thought it possible I should be—but Robert is my husband.'

'I know that; ye needn't tell me,' after which remark Mr. McCullagh resumed his newspaper with the muttered comment, 'I daresay it's natural enough.'

But a few minutes elapsed, however, before he again spoke.

'For all that, Jean, I think I must still buy you a dress. Mrs. Kenneth is coming up next month, and I don't just like she should say we're not able to afford a few yards of stuff among us.'

Some few days later Mr. McCullagh came up-stairs before dinner, calling for his daughter-in-law, who, as usual, was close at hand.

'They sent the gown length in all right, did they, Jean?'

'Yes; but I was truly grieved you should have bought anything so expensive for me. I never thought to have another silk dress, and—'

'Hoots!' said Mr. McCullagh, cutting across her sentence; 'when I was doing the thing, I thought I might as well get a good one. It'll last ye years. O, and here's a bit of a present I brought in with me; I'll be up again presently; and he tossed her over a

piece of paper, which proved to be a receipt in full from Mr. Snow for the money he had advanced to Robert.

When, a little later, she tried to speak her thanks, Mr. McCullagh stopped her quite summarily.

'Ye'll be able now,' he said, with a queer twinkle in his eyes, 'to buy pins and needles and cottons and laces: and when ye want the money to go out to Robert, come to me; I'll manage somehow to write ye a cheque.'

'He must be going to die,' was Alfred Mostin's conclusion when Janey told him what had happened. 'It's an awful bad sign, you may depend. When a man like plain auld Rab takes to shovelling out guineas in this reckless manner, you may be sure he feels he is going where they can't be of any use to him.'

She put her hand over the speaker's mouth, and said,

'If you could only imagine how kind he has been to me!'

'He'd have been a wretch if he had not,' was his grudging answer.

'You do not know how good he is,' she persisted.

'I fancy I do,' he replied, with a dubious smile. 'However, I am glad he has given you this relief.'

Time went by, and still it seemed as though Robert was as far from being able to send for his wife as ever. He strove to write cheerfully, but to Janey it was quite plain that he was doing no better in America than in England.

'He's no in such a hurry to write for ye as ye're in to go to him,' Mr. McCullagh took a malicious pleasure in observing; whilst Janey sent out every shilling she had been able to scrape together, hoping and trusting this might help him to do some good.

'I am as happy as possible with

your father,' she wrote; 'but I want you, dear. This separation is dreadful.'

He had been away over two years, when one day in the late autumn Mr. McCullagh said,

'I wish ye'd have a bit of supper ready to-night, Jean—about eight. I'm expecting a friend to look in.'

Somewhat listlessly she answered it should be ready.

'Ye're no feeling very well, are ye?' asked her father-in-law.

'I am a little low,' was her reply. 'I cannot help wondering what news will be in the next American letters. The mail is due to-morrow, is it not?'

'Yes, to-morrow morning.'

It was 'between the lights,' and she sat without candles beside the hearth, on which, for once, a good fire blazed, marveling if she should ever see her husband again, looking at the flickering flame, and recalling the happy days of their happy married life, which, as in a dream, she beheld through tears, when her reverie was broken by the noise of Mr. McCullagh's latchkey turning in the lock of the hall-door. She did not stir till she heard the steps of two persons ascending the stairs, and then she knew the expected guest had come before his time, and started up to light the candles. Before she could do so, however, they were in the room, and Mr. McCullagh's voice was saying cheerfully,

'Ay, here she is herself! Now, Jean, who do ye think I've brought to see ye?'

For one second she hesitated, then the match she was holding dropped out of her fingers.

'Robert!' she cried—'Robert!' and she was clasped in her husband's arms.

'Ye see, Jean,' observed Mr. McCullagh a few minutes later,

when he had lit the candles and pulled down the blinds, 'I couldn't do without ye, so I was forced to bring your husband back again; and now, that there may be no anxiety or misunderstanding, I just want to say one word before ye give him his supper. I always said I'd never take a partner, and I never will; but if Robert likes to turn his mind to the business here, he'll have no reason to complain that I am trying to screw him down. Mr. Roy is not what he was, and I want somebody that'll do what I want as I want. Your brothers are making everything they sell out of something different from what it should be, and I'll have none of that. The old business has stuck to me, and I'll stick to it. Mr. Snow and me are agreed ye'd best not try to start anything on your own account; so if ye like what I propose, there it is for ye, and ye may settle your mind.'

'I shall only be too thankful,' answered Robert; 'and I will try to serve you faithfully, sir.'

'But I am no going to part with Jean,' explained Mr. McCullagh. 'Ye must live here and put up with my ways as well as ye can; and as for your boys, I'll see they've the best education I can give them. I heard a word dropped a while ago that one of them might be asked for some day, when they are looking out for the heir of Lilands' Abbey; but it is no use looking too far ahead. The first thing ye shall both do is take a run out of town, for, indeed, I want to see a streak of colour back again in Jean's white cheeks; and so, during the whole of supper, Mr. McCullagh talked on, while the husband and wife, too happy for speech or food, sat hand locked in hand, 'just,' said Mr. McCullagh, 'a perfect pair of babes in the wood.'

'And we'll let all bygones be bygones, Robert,' observed his father magnanimously, 'and we'll cast no backward looks to the time when ye were so proud to be junior to the senior partner, and to be let into the Pousnett swindle.'

Robert smiled somewhat sadly. 'I hope I shall never see Mr. Pousnett again,' he remarked.

But one Saturday, when Mr. McCullagh ran down to them at Brighton, the very first person they met on the Chain Pier was that gentleman.

Robert affected not to notice him, and passed on with Janey; but Mr. Pousnett, swooping down on Mr. McCullagh with the exclamation, 'Ah, my old friend!' bore him off to the Parade, where he told him a great many things, true and false, winding up with the statement, Mrs. Pousnett and his daughters were stopping also

at the Bedford, 'where you had better come and dine with us,' he finished.

But Mr. McCullagh excused himself somewhat stiffly. Perhaps he felt he had partaken of Mr. Pousnett's hospitality often enough.

He spoke of this encounter afterwards to Captain Crawford, who called upon him in Basinghall-street.

'Yes,' said that gentleman, 'he is down there with Benaron, the millionaire, who is going to marry Lord Cresham's widow. I suppose you have heard they are going to make Pousnett a baronet.'

'Never!' exclaimed Mr. McCullagh.

'They are, though.'

'In the name of all that's wonderful, why would they do that?'

'*He is a representative man,*' answered Captain Crawford dryly.

THE END.

THE BICYCLE BELL.

A Suburban Lyric.

O, SWEET are the sounds of waters, and sweet
The distant echoes of welcome feet,
The wild birds' singing, the hum of bees,
The night wind's rustle in summer trees ;
But none, to my ear, in sweetness excel
The wee tink-tink of the bicycle bell !

Whenever I hear it, I stand once more,
At twilight's fall, by the garden door—
The garden door, that shuts out from the street
An enclosure teeming with odours sweet—
List'ning (O, why should I blush to tell?)
The first tink-tink of a bicycle bell.

It ceases at length, where I knew it would ;
The door half open, and where late I stood
Another stands ; but he sees not me,
For I am no longer there, you see ;
And I would not for *he* should know as well
I had heard the sound of that bicycle bell !

But soon together we walk or stand ;
I feel it again, that touch of the hand !
I hear the words I shall ne'er forget ;
My eyes are full, my cheeks are wet ;
Again I feel my bosom swell,
As silently by hangs the bicycle bell.

Some years have gone, some sorrows have come ;
No longer each morning he leaves his home,
Or at eve returns to it mounted *thus*,
But soberly on an omnibus.
But every whit I love it as well,
Whenever I hear it, the bicycle bell.

And there is one who soon will be
(Though at present he's scarcely above my knee),
In his opinion, quite ' enough big'
To manage the unused ' whirligig ;'
And it makes my heart with pleasure swell
That he too loves the bicycle bell.





PALES FROM OUR ALBUM.
(From Photograph by W. & D. Downey.)

The time of a woman, whatever be the time or season of her mind, whatever be the importance of the
the present, it always an episode in a realm in the story of her life."—MAYOR 20 57 18.

LONDON SOCIETY.

APRIL 1882.

THE QUEEN AND OUR ROYAL FAMILY IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

WE take up once more some gleanings from contemporary literature, to which we add some facts and comments of our own, on the subject of our gracious Majesty the Queen, with whose mild and beneficent rule Providence has blessed us so long and so signally. We need hardly say that we do so with a feeling of quickened loyalty, now that her Majesty, through the same kindly Providence, has been saved from the bullet, whether of madman or assassin, that might have taken the life so beloved and honoured by us all. Seven times has such an attempt been made; it is now ten years since the last, and we may trust that this recurrence is the very last. We spare ourselves and our readers the pain of glancing at these seven treasonable acts, except so far as they uniformly illustrate the unshaken nerves and high personal courage of the Queen. We have seen how such acute observers and good judges as Lord Campbell and the Baroness Bunsen have spoken of the Queen's wonderful strength of character, and the royal heart and nerve that she must possess. Such high-toned courage necessarily has its springs more in moral than in physical causes. Of what kind such courage is may be learned from such a

poem as Wordsworth's 'Happy Warrior.' This poem gives the best account of courage since Aristotle's *Ethics*, and is indeed a better one. There are some lines, indeed, that seem peculiarly to describe her Majesty's character:

'Whose powers shed round him in the
common strife
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
And who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment, to which Heaven
has joined
Great issues, good or bad, for human
kind,
Is happy as a lover, and inspired;
And through the heat of conflict keeps
the law
In calmness made, and sees what he
foresaw;
Or, if an unexpected call succeed
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
Whom neither shape of danger can dis-
may,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth
stand fast,
Looks forward persevering to the last,
From well to better daily self-surpassed.'

In some respects her Majesty illustrates the doctrine of Atavism, for the heroic courage shown by her grandfather, George the Third, on a similar occasion has been displayed again in the third generation, as well as those many simple sterling qualities for which, as Thackeray truly said, the heart of the nation will always beat kindly towards the good old King. There were some remarks made in the two Houses of Parliament which

well deserve being retained in a permanent form, and which illustrate our subject. Great statesmen who have grown gray in the service of the Crown gave their attestation to her Majesty's queenly conduct and demeanour. 'I remember,' said Earl Granville, 'as if it were yesterday, that in 1850, Lord John Russell, a man of singularly calm and collected character, told me immediately after an outrage on the Queen that he was perfectly astonished at the courage her Majesty exhibited at that moment. Thirty-two years have elapsed since that time, and it is possible that her Majesty has suffered some diminution of physical strength, but the same brave spirit which characterised her Majesty at that time has remained to this day. The first inquiry of the Queen was whether any one was hurt. She next expressed her appreciation of the courage of the Princess Beatrice. It is with the highest satisfaction that I state—and I state it on the highest authority, that of the illustrious Prince who has only just left the Queen—that after this attempt, which was enough to shock the nerves of the bravest man, he left her Majesty in the enjoyment of the same health as she possessed before the attempt.' Mr. Gladstone had some interesting words: 'Her Majesty has deeply felt that sentiment of thankfulness which ever overpowers and overshadows the sentiment of pain on this occasion. She has felt it not only for herself, but for the other lives which were wickedly and recklessly exposed, even with a more absolute want of cause or pretext than might be said to be the case in the instance of her Majesty. The Princess Beatrice, we are rejoiced to learn, has shown on this occasion remarkable courage, together

with an entire forgetfulness of herself, in her absorption in the attempt upon the life of her illustrious mother.' 'We cannot but feel,' said Sir Stafford Northcote, 'that she who has always been so prompt in her sympathy for others has a claim upon our sympathy, independently even of considerations of loyalty. We cannot but feel that it would have been strange if a Sovereign who commands so much of the respect and sympathy of foreign nations, and who has never been slow to express her own sympathy with others in misfortune, had not received such assurances.'

Perhaps the earliest mention of the Princess Victoria is to be found in a letter written by the illustrious Wilberforce to a friend in her way illustrious—Hannah More. Writing on July 21, 1820, Wilberforce says: 'In consequence of a very civil message from the Duchess of Kent I waited on her this morning. She received me with her fine animated child on the floor by her side, with its playthings, of which I soon became one. She was very civil; but as she did not sit down, I did not think it right to stay above a quarter of an hour.' Leigh Hunt, in his pleasant book on the *Old Court Suburb*, says: 'We remember well the peculiar pleasure which it gave us to see the future Queen, the first time we ever did see her, coming up a cross path from the Bayswater Gate, with a girl of her own age by her side, whose hand she was holding as if she loved her. A magnificent footman in scarlet came behind her, with the splendidest pair of calves in white stockings which we ever beheld. He looked somehow like a gigantic fairy, personating for his little lady's sake the grandest kind of footman he could think of; and his calves he seemed

to have made out of a couple of the biggest chain lamps in the possession of the godmother of Cinderella.' An interesting passage is to be found in the second volume of Lord Albemarle's autobiography. Lord Albemarle says: 'One of my occupations of a morning, while waiting for the Duke, was to watch from the windows the movements of a bright, pretty little girl, seven years of age. She was in the habit of watering the plants immediately under the window. It was amusing to see how impartially she divided the contents of the watering-pot between the flowers and her own little feet. Her simple but becoming dress contrasted favourably with the gorgeous apparel now worn by the little damsels of the rising generation—a large straw hat and a suit of white cotton, a coloured fichu round the neck was the only ornament she wore. The young lady I am describing was the Princess Victoria, now our gracious Sovereign, whom may God long preserve!' Mr. Charles Knight, in his *Passages of a Working Life*,* has a similar and very interesting passage. In the early morning, when hardly any one was astir in Kensington Palace Gardens, he used to watch the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria, attended by a single page, breakfast in the open air. Mr. Hedderwick, the Glasgow poet, who has always had an audience, fit, though few, says:

'Once, as I strayed a student, happiest then
What time the summer's garniture was on,
Beneath the princely shades of Kensington,
A girl I spied, whose years might number ten,
With full round eyes and fair round English face.'[†]

An extremely interesting refer-

* Vol. ii. p. 57.

† *Lays of Middle Age*.

ence is made by Moore to the royal skill in music in the *Diary of Thomas Moore*, edited by Lord John Russell:

'Oct. 20th, 1830.—Have been invited to Watson Taylor's to meet the Duchess of Kent and young Victoria. About half-past five the Duchess and Princess arrived; found that Sir J. Conroy, their attendant, was an old acquaintance of mine. . . . Music in the evening. The Duchess sang a duet or two with the Princess Victoria, and several very pretty German songs by herself. One or two by Weber and Hummel particularly pretty, and her manner of singing just what a lady's ought to be. No attempts at *bravuras* or graces, but all simplicity and expression. I also sung several songs, with which H.R.H. was pleased to be pleased. Evidently very fond of music, and would have gone on singing much longer if there had not been rather premature preparations for bed.

'25th.—After breakfast the Duchess expressed a wish for a little more music, and she and the Princess and myself sung a good deal. The Duchess sung over three or four times with me, 'Go where glory waits thee,' pronouncing the words very prettily, and altogether singing with more taste than any one I ever found. Repeated also her pretty German songs, and very graciously promised me copies of them, having intimated how much she should like to have copies of those songs I had sung for her.'

We may quote a little further from Lord Albemarle:

'In the summer of 1835 my sister, Lady Anne Coke, summoned me to Holkham, to help her to do the honours in receiving the Princess Victoria and the Duchess of Kent. Great were

* Vol. vi. p. 154.

the preparations on the occasion. Their Royal Highnesses were expected at dinner, but they were detained two hours by bankers (navvies) of Lynn, who, in an excess of loyalty, insisted on drawing the royal carriage through the town. . . . Soon after their Royal Highnesses appeared in person. Both were most affable. The youthful Princess in particular showed in her demeanour that winning courtesy with which millions of her subjects have since become familiar.

'In June of this year died William IV. I was one of the crowd that saw his youthful successor on the day of her proclamation. She appeared at the open window of the Privy Council Chamber in St. James's Palace, looking on the quadrangle nearest Marlborough House. Never shall I forget the enthusiastic cheers which greeted the slight graceful figure of the illustrious young lady, nor the thrill of chivalrous loyalty that ran through the assembled multitude. At the sound of the first shouts the colour faded from the Queen's cheeks, and her eyes filled with tears. The emotion thus called forth imparted an additional charm to the winning courtesy with which the girl-Sovereign accepted the proffered homage.'

Even the sardonic Greville writes with a positive glow of feeling: 'I particularly watched her when Melbourne and the Ministers and the Duke of Wellington and Peel approached her. She went through the whole ceremony, occasionally looking at Melbourne for instruction when she had any doubt what to do, which hardly ever occurred, and with perfect calmness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and ingratiating. Peel said how amazed he was at her apparent deep sense

of her situation, her modesty, and at the same time her firmness. He could not have wished that a daughter of his own had acted in the least degree differently.' Earl Russell, in his autobiographical work, gives an interesting remark of the Queen's, interesting in its simplicity and trustfulness: 'Queen Victoria, conscious of her own love of truth and justice, told her mother, the Duchess of Kent, that she ascended the throne without alarm.*'

In the second volume of the *Life of Leslie*, the painter, we have a series of interesting references to the Queen. The first is a visit which she paid to the Royal Academy when princess:

'About four o'clock the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria came, without any ceremony, in the midst of the company, having sent us word in the morning that they intended doing so. This was never done before, their visits on other occasions being strictly private. The little Princess has all the charms of health, youth, and high spirits. She could have seen little of the exhibition, as she was herself, from the moment of entering the room, the sole object of attraction; and there were so many people among the nobility present whom she knew, and every one of whom had something to say to her. She heard that Charles Kemble was in the room, and she desired he might be presented to her; which gave him an opportunity of making one of his best genteel comedy bows. She shook hands and chatted with Mr. Rogers.'

When the young Queen was crowned Leslie goes to the coronation:

'I was obliged to hire a Court dress for the occasion, and ap-

* Earl Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 264.

peared for the first and last time of my life with a sword by my side. I was very near the altar and the chair in which the Queen was crowned; and when she signed the coronation oath I could see that she wrote a large bold hand. . . . The Queen, I am told, had studied her part very diligently, and she went through it extremely well. I don't know why, but the first sight of her in her robes brought tears into my eyes, and it had this effect on many people; she looked almost like a child. She is very fond of dogs, and has one very favourite little spaniel, who is always on the look-out for her return when she has been from home. She had, of course, been separated from him on that day longer than usual; and when the State coach drove up to the steps of the palace, she heard him barking with joy in the hall, and exclaimed, "There's Dash!" and was in a hurry to lay aside the sceptre and ball she carried in her hands, and take off the crown and robes, *to go and wash little Dash*. . . . Before the pictures were removed from the exhibition the little Queen paid it a visit. She did not go in State—that is with a guard of soldiers—and the policemen and her footmen had great difficulty in keeping the crowd from incommoding her when she alighted at the Academy. Her mother was with her, and she was attended by the Duchess of Sutherland, the Marchioness of Tavistock, and two young ladies, whose names I did not hear. These, with Lord Albemarle, and two young gentlemen, completed her suite. They were all dressed very plainly in mourning; and there was nothing to distinguish the Queen from the other ladies but a long train, which was not, however, held up. She looked very pretty; and none of the engravings yet published do

her anything like justice. Chalon has made a splendid drawing of her, whole length, in the robes of state; and when an engraving of this gets to America you will know how she looks. Her manner is unaffectedly graceful; and towards her mother she appears the same affectionate little girl we saw at the Academy on the 1st of May, still calling her "mamma." Before leaving the rooms the President presented each of us to her separately, at her own request, and she afterwards took occasion to address a word or two to each by name. She asked me how many pictures I had there, and if I did not think it a very fine exhibition. . . . Wilkie has painted her at her first council, which took place immediately on the news of the death of the King reaching London. There are an immense number of figures; and the peculiarity of the subject—a young girl of eighteen, unattended by any other female, taking her place at the head of a long table, and surrounded by all the great dignitaries of the Church, State, and Law, is very striking. She is dressed very simply, in white (for it is not the etiquette that she should be in mourning till after the funeral of the King); and this adds to her innocent and dove-like appearance. . . . We got to Windsor, however, a very few minutes past ten, and I have established myself in the pleasant bedroom we had together. I had no sittings, nor have I seen her Majesty, who rode out. I was glad to find Lord Melbourne is here; and I sent a message to him to request a sitting to-morrow, and received for answer that he will do so *with pleasure*. . . . I found at the castle a letter from Lady Holland waiting for me, full of kind expressions, and the congratulations of Lord Holland and herself. . . .

She has heard from Lord Melbourne and Lady Cowper that the Queen is *extremely pleased with the picture*. . . . Lord Melbourne sat this morning like a good Prime Minister; but was called away, and will sit again to-morrow; and the Duchess of Kent sent word she would prefer sitting to-morrow instead of to-day, and I was obliged to acquiesce. . . . The composition was entirely arranged on the canvas, and the Queen seemed much pleased when she saw it. At the conclusion of the sitting she said she would sit again the next day; and a few minutes after she left the room the Marquis of Conyngham (Lord Chamberlain) came in, and asked me if the picture was bespoken. He said he knew her Majesty would like to have a picture of mine, and he thought she would prefer this subject to any other. . . . The Queen has sat five times. She is now so far satisfied with the likeness that she does not wish me to touch it again. She sat not only for the face, but for as much as is seen of the figure, and for the hands with the coronation ring on her finger. Her hands, by the bye, are very pretty; the backs dimpled and the fingers delicately shaped. She was particular also in having her hair dressed exactly as she wore it at the ceremony every time she sat. She has suggested an alteration in the composition of the picture, and I suppose she thinks it like the scene; for she asked me where I sat, and said, "I suppose you made a sketch on the spot". . . . Every day lunch is sent to me, which, as it is always very plentiful and good, I generally make my dinner. The best of wine is sent in a beautiful little decanter, with a V.R. and the crown engraved on it; and the table-cloths and napkins have the royal arms and other insignia on them as a

pattern. . . . Her Majesty is to sit again this week (I hope, for her sake, for the last time). She is extremely obliging, and puts me in high spirits about the picture, by liking it very much. . . . I received six hundred guineas for the Queen's picture. This was the price fixed by myself, and which I had previously named to the gentleman I was to paint it for before she expressed a wish to have it. I did not think it right to ask the Queen more. Never was sovereign who spent royal money in a way more creditable to the spender than she does—and this is great praise.

In an American periodical we have a further anecdote obtained from Mr. Leslie:*

'I was in London in 1838, and was present with my excellent friend, the late Charles R. Leslie, R.A., at the imposing ceremonies of the coronation of the Queen in Westminster Abbey. He then related to me the following incident, which I think may truly be said to have been the first act of her reign: When her predecessor, William IV., died, a messenger was immediately despatched by his Queen (then become by his death Queen Dowager) to Victoria, apprising her of the event. She immediately called for paper, and indited a letter of condolence to the widow. Folding it, she directed it "To the Queen of England." Her maid of honour in attendance, noticing the inscription, said, "Your Majesty, you are Queen of England!" "Yes," she replied; "but the widowed Queen is not to be reminded of the fact first by me."'

Some interesting stories are told of the early days, when the Queen was obliged to sign death warrants, before she was relieved from

*Mr. J. B. Thorp in *New York Journal of Commerce*.

that odious duty, and a sign-manual substituted by Act of Parliament. On several occasions the Queen may be said to have begged off the life of offenders. And on one occasion, 'with a hand trembling from eagerness and emotion, she wrote "pardoned" across the fatal scroll.'

There are a great many floating anecdotes respecting her Majesty circulating in society. It is to be hoped, and it is probable, that some of the best of these are among the literary treasures in reserve. Some of these are common property, one might almost say; but it would be difficult to give them in a perfectly accurate form, or submit them to any process of verification. They are interesting, they redound to the credit of the Sovereign and of human nature; but the time of publication has not yet come. It is also to be said that a great degree of reticence is very properly imposed on all connected with the Court. Her Majesty, on principle, has always steadily discouraged anything in the way of gossip or trivial conversation respecting the affairs of the household. So many persons are brought into passing, and somewhat intimate, connection with royalty, that it is obvious that the sanctity of the *vis intime* of the Court could not be obtained unless such a rule were carefully observed. We remember knowing a lady, who was credited with being a private correspondent of her Majesty's for years, from her youth; but the most distant allusion to this interesting circumstance never escaped her. Others, though not quite so reticent, are always guarded and careful. It would be a good thing if, all over the country, her Majesty's wishes with regard to such matters prevailed in the daily life of the community.

Occasionally, in such unlikely places as public meetings, something of interest has been mentioned respecting her Majesty. Thus, at a meeting of the London Missionary Society, Mr. Ellis, the famous missionary of Madagascar, mentioned the following interesting circumstance: A draft of a treaty of amity and commerce was sent out from England to Madagascar, and on the margin these words were written: 'Queen Victoria asks, as a personal favour to herself, that the Queen of Madagascar will allow no persecution of the Christians.' A month afterwards the treaty was signed in Madagascar, with the insertion of the following words: 'In accordance with the wish of Queen Victoria, the Queen of Madagascar engages there shall be no persecution of the Christians in Madagascar.'

At a public meeting for opening some church schools at Padiham in Lancashire, Sir James Kay Shuttleworth mentioned that he had been once called in by the Queen and Prince to organise some schools for her for the scattered population of Windsor Forest. The children were not only to be instructed in religious and secular knowledge, but also in making clothes, in cookery, and in gardening. The plan cost the Queen a thousand a year, and the Queen took a strong personal interest in visiting the place, and watching its development. The Prince of Wales was for some time in the habit of examining the scholars. At a meeting held at Cambridge, on behalf of the Army Scripture Readers' Society, the Chaplain of the Forces at Aldershot narrated the following anecdote: 'The incumbent of Osborne had occasion to visit an aged parishioner. Upon his arrival at the house, as he

entered the door where the invalid was, he found, sitting by the bedside, a lady in deep mourning reading the word of God. He was about to retire when the lady remarked, "Pray remain! I should not wish the invalid to lose the comfort which a clergyman might afford." The lady retired, and the clergyman found, lying on the bed, a book with texts of Scripture adapted to the sick; and he found that out of that book portions of Scripture had been read by the lady in black. That lady was the Queen of England.' Many are the instances on record of the visits of her Majesty to the school and cottage, the work-house and the hospital.

Political feeling ran very high in the early years of her Majesty's reign, higher than fortunately has ever been the case since. The Government of the day made a great mistake in not taking the chiefs of the Opposition into their counsel, and so coming with unanimous proposals before the two Houses. This error has been avoided in the settlements made on behalf of members of the Royal Family. Opposition was offered to the incomes to be assigned to the Duchess of Kent and Prince Albert; and there was a question of precedence relating to Prince Albert, which was not settled for many years. Lord Brougham attacked the allowance of 30,000*l.* a year to the Duchess of Kent. He spoke of her as the Queen-Mother. Lord Melbourne corrected by exclaiming, 'Not Queen-Mother, the mother of the Queen.' Lord Brougham: 'I admit my noble friend is right. On a point of this sort I humble myself before my learned friend. I have no courtier-like cultivation. I am rude of speech. The tongue of my noble friend is so well hung, and so well attuned to courtly

airs, that I cannot compete with him for the prize which he is now so eagerly struggling to win. Not being given to *glozing* and *flattery*, I may say that the Duchess of Kent (whether to be called Queen-Mother or Mother of the Queen) is nearly connected with the throne; and a plain man like myself, having no motive but to do my duty, may be permitted to surmise that any additional provision for her may possibly come from the Civil List, which you have so lavishly voted.' Lord Melbourne succeeded in making a very cutting and telling reply. Later, Brougham bitterly attacked Thomas Wild, who had become Lord Truro. He declared that Jonathan Wild had become a courtier, and having married the Queen's cousin laid all his patronage at the Queen's feet. As to her having all the livings in the Chancellor's gift it does not so much signify; but it will never do to let the Court dispose of judicial appointments. Baron Stockmar shall tell the story about the question of precedence: 'I had heard from the Tories that the clause respecting the precedence was certain to be thrown out of the House of Lords. None of my acquaintances whom I could have sent to Wellington or Peel were in town. In my great anxiety I sent my trusted friend Mrs. W. to the Duke of Wellington to represent to him how deeply this question touched the Queen. He received her, listened to her, scolded a little, and gave an uncertain answer, so that this move produced no result. The Queen had taken the defeat respecting the annuity with great composure, but laid all the greater weight upon the success of the question respecting precedence. When Lord Melbourne informed her of the probability of his being de-

feated in the Upper House, and therefore proposed that the matter should be dropped, she could not bring herself to follow this advice. I now went to Melbourne, and found him doubtful and irresolute. I said to him, "For God's sake withdraw your bill, and do not allow yourself to be beaten a second time. This would have the very worst effect possible." He answered: "That I fully believe; but the Queen lays the greatest possible stress upon the matter." I replied: "Be only firm, and prove to her Majesty the evil results that would follow from a second discomfiture." He answered: "Yes; but what is to happen next?" "Settle the matter of precedence," I said, "by an Order in Council, as the Regent did in the case of Prince Leopold." I went home and copied out for Melbourne the words which the Regent had used in 1826 to settle the rank of Prince Leopold, and sent them to him.'

We alluded in our last article to the occasion of the installation of the Prince Consort as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. But some years earlier the Queen made a somewhat hasty and informal visit to Cambridge, of which an account has happily been preserved by the wife of the Master of Trinity.

Mrs. Whewell wrote to her mother that the Master of Trinity 'had a letter from Mr. Goulburn saying that when he was at Windsor yesterday, the Queen and Prince Albert expressed a strong desire to pay a visit to the University of Cambridge, and commissioned him to communicate with W. on the subject. Mr. Goulburn had informed them that Trinity claimed on all occasions the honour of receiving her Majesty or her representatives, and that we should feel highly

honoured by her visit. The probable time of the visit would be some day in the week after next. The 25th was finally settled. Imagine my difficulties in finding out first what was necessary on such an extraordinary occasion, what ought to be done, and what on such short notice could be done. However, it ended in my having twenty-one bedrooms and four sitting-rooms prepared for the Queen and Prince and their attendants in the house, besides two kitchens and three sitting-rooms for the different classes of servants. The employment was of great use to me; if I had not been so busy I should have grown very nervous about it.

'The morning of Wednesday 25th was dull, but cleared up to the most brilliant sunshine. The clock had scarcely finished striking two when we heard signals that the Queen was come. I ran down to the door to be ready to perform my part, trembling a little as you will easily believe; indeed, the thrilling shouts were enough alone to make one do that. I had not even the comfort of my husband with me, for he had to meet the Queen in the middle of the court as Master of Trinity with the eight Seniors, and deliver to her the keys of the College. She made a reply, of which he could distinguish no words, only the sweet tone of her voice. W. and I received commands to dine with the Queen at eight o'clock; hasty notices were sent out to those whom she would receive in the evening. At dinner, the Queen, and still more the Prince, asked my husband questions about the University and College; to which he gave such full answers, and they seemed to take so much interest in hearing them, that it quite took off the disagreeable effect of a royal categorical con-

versation. Surely if people keep a command over themselves, so as only to follow their lead and continue the subject no longer than it is encouraged, they must like full free answers better than short dry replies, which make conversation a burden. Certainly the Queen and Prince seemed to like it.

'After dinner, in the drawing-room, the Queen asked me if those were curious prints which lay on the table. I had taken care to place some interesting ones there, for the chance of her looking at them. The book she took most notice of was an old book by Sir Edward Stanhope, of coats of arms of our founders and benefactors, which we had got out of the muniment room. I pointed out some of the changes—Henry VIII.'s for instance, with the rouge dragon of Cadwallader, the last of the Britons, for a supporter; James I.'s with the unicorn. When Prince Albert came upstairs she pointed it out to him. He seemed a very good herald, and told me several foreign coats that had quite puzzled me, and also Lord and Lady Braybrooke, who are great heralds.

'Half-past four was fixed for their departure, so I held myself in readiness to perform my last duty in escorting the Queen to the door. Miss Stanley came and said the Queen had sent for me. I came to the green drawing-room and waited there. Soon I was summoned to her in the next room. She gave me a beautiful bracelet, saying she wished to give it to me with her own hands. I hardly knew how to express my gratitude sufficiently, and my surprise was so great it added to my difficulty. She spoke very kindly indeed, and Prince Albert came and said that the only thing he regretted was the shortness of the

visit. They proceeded to the door; the Master was on the stairs. We accompanied them, walking as much backwards as we could. The Prince shook hands heartily with the Master and wished him good-bye. The Queen put on her cloak in the hall, shook my hand—they were in the carriage—the last shouts, and it was all over.'

Mr. Whewell says, 'I do not know that I can tell you much of the Queen's visit that the newspapers have not already told you, for she was in public almost the whole time of her being here. She was very kind in all her expressions to us; told Cordelia that everything in her apartments was "so nice, so comfortable," and at parting gave her a very pretty bracelet. The Prince was very agreeable, intelligent and conversible, seemed much interested with all he saw, and talked a good deal about his German University, Bonn. It appeared from the general management of matters as if his amusement and gratification were the main objects of the expedition.

'At dinner I was opposite the Queen, who talked easily and cheerfully. I had also a good deal of occasion to talk to her, in showing her the lions of Cambridge, which she ran over very rapidly.

'It is no small matter to provide for the Queen's reception even as we did. We had about forty servants of the Queen in the house, besides a dozen men belonging to the stable department who were in the town. The Queen's coachman is reported to have said that he had taken her Majesty to many places, but never to anywhere where she was so well received, or where *the ale was so good*; the latter circumstance, I suppose, in his estimate, set the seal upon our merits.'

A pleasant little story went the round of the University at the time, illustrative of wonderful old Whewell, who raised himself from the position of a sizar to be the Master, and subsequently the benefactor, of his college. When the Queen was his guest at Trinity Lodge, or rather took possession of it in her own right, the morning after her arrival Whewell saluted her with friendly but uncourtly warmth. "Good-morning, your Majesty. How d'y'e do? Hope your Majesty slept well. Fine morning." The Queen returned a gracious answer—it would not be in her Majesty's nature to do otherwise—but the lords and ladies in attendance were awe-stricken at the frightful breach of etiquette that had commenced, but of which, probably, no one thought less than did the Queen herself. A similar breach of etiquette is related by Lord Campbell of Lord Brougham. Brougham had quarrelled with all the world, and among the rest he was wrathful towards the blameless Prince.

The Prince thought to appease him by asking him to dine with the Queen. He went and dined; but widened his breach with the Court by leaving the palace immediately after dinner, instead of going with the rest of the gentlemen into the gallery, into which the Queen had retired with the ladies, and where she is in the habit of conversing with her guests. He afterwards tried to make amends by attending the Queen's drawing-room—a condescension he had not before practised since her accession; but here again he was unfortunate (although I really believe he wished to be civil and respectful) by speaking to the Queen *ex mero motu* as he passed her, and telling her that "he was to cross over to Paris in a few days, where he

should see Louis Philippe, and that if her Majesty had any letters or messages for the King of the French, it would give him much pleasure to have the honour of being the bearer of them." Lord Brougham was certainly honoured by no commission from the Queen on that occasion.

We may give one or two statements from foreign ambassadors. The first is M. Guizot's account of his first introduction to the Court of St. James's:

'February the 29th.—At ten minutes past one I received a note from Lord Palmerston telling me that the Queen would receive me that same day at one o'clock. I immediately sent to him to explain the delay and my own innocence. I dressed with all speed, and reached Buckingham Palace a little before two. Lord Palmerston arrived at the same moment. The Queen's orders had been forwarded to him late, they had not been despatched on the instant. Fortunately the Queen had other audiences to give, which occupied her while expecting us. . . . The Queen received me with a gracious manner at once youthful and serious: the dignity of her deportment added to her stature. "I trust, madam," said I on entering, "that your Majesty is aware of my excuse, for of myself I should be inexcusable." She smiled, as if little surprised at the want of punctuality. My audience was short; the King, the Queen, the Royal Family, the intimacy of the King with the Duke of Kent, with surprise that I had never before visited England, formed the topics of conversation. As I was retiring Lord Palmerston, who had remained a moment with the Queen, rejoined me hastily. "There is something more," he said: "I am going to introduce you to Prince

Albert and the Duchess of Kent; you could not otherwise be presented to them but at the next *levée*, on the 6th of March, and it is necessary, on the contrary, that on that day you should already be old friends." The double presentation took place. I was struck with the political intelligence which, though with much reserve, intermingled itself in the conversation of Prince Albert. . . . On Monday, the 30th of March, I was at the Queen's ball. Lord Palmerston, passing with me into a saloon adjoining the gallery of Buckingham Palace, appeared clearly disposed to enter on Eastern matters. I thought it best still to hold off, and leave him engaged with the exclusively English view of the question which was fermenting around him. . . . I saw the commencement of that rare regal happiness which the death of Prince Albert has recently destroyed before its time, if it is permitted to us to assign any particular time as more suitable to death than another. How could I at this moment revert to the assemblies and festivals of that young and happy Royalty, equally charmed with its domestic life and its throne, and respecting which England delighted to indulge in those brilliant hopes of domestic virtue and political wisdom which have been so worthily realised.'

In a recent work, *Monsieur Guizot in Private Life*, by his daughter, Madame de Witt, there are some curious notices of life at Windsor. He said he won twenty pounds in the Ascot sweepstakes, 'Twenty-three sovereigns for me, which will balance the twenty pounds I had to spend in fees to the servants at Windsor Castle.' He thus writes to his son: 'I write to you from Windsor, my dear Guillaume. It certainly is

one of the most delightful and picturesque castles in the world; its exterior is a Gothic fortress of the Middle Ages, the interior is a very elegant and comfortable modern palace. The dining-room is splendid. There were nearly eighty of us, all English except myself. The ceiling is of old sculptured oak. The walls are hung all round with steel armour—helmets, lances, cuirasses and swords. On my left sat the young Queen, whom they tried to assassinate the other day, in gay spirits, talking a great deal, laughing very often and longing to laugh still more; and filling with her gaiety, which contrasted with the already tragical elements in her history, this ancient castle which has witnessed the career of all her predecessors. It was all very grand, very beautiful, very striking.'

We may compare with this French account a brief narrative drawn from an Italian source. Upon the death of their much loved Sovereign, Vittorio Emanuele, the Italian Ministers deputed General della Rocca, a man who had been honoured by the friendship of the late king, to convey the melancholy intelligence to her Majesty the Queen. On arriving at Osborne House, the General and his suite were in a short time received by her Majesty in person, with a gracious condescension which charmed him.

'The true sorrow felt by her Majesty showed itself in voice and manner; she spoke of the great loss the King's death was to the Italian nation at large, spoke with admiration of his soldierly character, calling him her brother of Italy, and then told General della Rocca how she should prize more than ever the beautiful little Sardinian ponies, delicate cream colour, which his late Majesty of Italy had so kindly sent to her,

ordering them to be brought out for the General to see them.'

The General is known to have spoken with much pride and emotion of the Queen's condescension and graceful reception of himself and his aides-de-camp.

Mendelssohn's musical history is identified with England. As a very young man he brought out in this country the overture and incidental music of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Not long before his death he produced, first in Birmingham and afterwards in London, his grand oratorio the *Elijah*. Prince Albert wrote on the book of the oratorio the following words :

'To the noble artist who, though encompassed by the Baal-worship of false art, by his genius and study has succeeded, like another Elijah, in faithfully preserving the worship of true art; once more habituating the ear, amid the giddy whirl of empty frivolous sound, to the fine tones of sympathetic feeling and legitimate harmony; to the great master who, by the tranquil current of his thoughts, reveals to us the gentle whisperings, as well as the mighty strife, of the elements; to him is this written in grateful remembrance by ALBERT.

'Buckingham Palace.'

We may well continue our quotation from the reminiscences of Felix Mendelssohn. 'It is well known how highly the Queen of England esteemed the German composer, and how graciously she treated him. She received him in her most intimate circle, and caused her pet birds to be carried out of the music-room, to prevent their singing while Mendelssohn was playing. She requested him in the most amiable manner to play some of his own compositions, and herself sang some of

his songs. With an engaging smile she expressed her dissatisfaction with her own performance, appealing playfully to her teacher, Lablache, who, she said, could vouch for her sometimes singing very tolerably; but she felt timid before him, the composer of all those beautiful things. While Mendelssohn was playing, she sat beside him at the piano watching his hands.* We are told, on peculiarly good authority, that on the 8th of May 1847, the day of his departure, 'he was summoned once more to Buckingham Palace, where he received a most valuable token of the esteem both of her Majesty and Prince Albert, who had always received Mendelssohn more as an illustrious visitor than as a professional artist.†

Mendelssohn, in writing to his mother, makes the following remarks: 'Add to this the pretty and most charming Queen Victoria, who looks so youthful, and is so gently courteous and gracious, who speaks such good German, and who knows all my music so well—the four books of 'Songs without Words,' and the Symphony, and the "Hymn of Praise." Yesterday evening I was sent for by the Queen, who was almost alone with Prince Albert, and who seated herself near the piano and made me play to her, first, seven of the "Songs without Words," then the serenade, two impromptus on "Rule Britannia," Lützow's "Wilde Jagd," and "Gaudeamus igitur." The latter was somewhat difficult, but remonstrance was out of the question, and as they gave the themes, of course it was my duty to play them. Then the splendid gallery in Buckingham Palace where

* Polko's *Reminiscences of Mendelssohn*, p. 147.

† Sir Julius Benedict's *Sketch of the Life and Works of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*, 1853.

they drank tea, and where two boars, by Paul Potter, are hanging, and a good many other pictures which pleased me well.*

There are some references to the Queen in the *Life of Patrick Fraser Tytler*, the Scottish historian, by Dr. Burgon, the Dean of Chichester. Tytler was intensely loyal. It was part of his own religion, and the religion which he taught his children. Captain Basil Hall, the well-known traveller, saw him presented at court. 'I wish you could have seen your brother when he knelt to kiss the Queen's hand.' The historian had for a time in his possession a collection of miniatures belonging to the Queen, which he was endeavouring to authenticate. This led to frequent messages from the palace. It was almost too much for his old serving-man, when a mounted messenger in royal livery would arrive on an errand from the palace, especially when some engravings were brought home of the Princess Royal, and the Prince of Wales, with the Queen's autograph. The Queen also commanded him to examine a singular relic in her Majesty's possession, known as the Darnley jewel, and make a report upon it. 'His notes he transmitted in writing to the palace, where they gave so much satisfaction that he received her Majesty's orders to cause a few copies to be printed for her Majesty's use, and by the end of April twenty-five elegant litho quarto volumes were the result. One of these copies was afterwards presented to himself.' He was invited to dine at Windsor Castle, and received her Majesty's commands to stay another day. He wrote down a full account of the events of that memorable

time, from which we make some excerpts. He relates how he went to prayers, which her Majesty, the Prince, and all the servants of the household attended, at nine.

'Soon after luncheon a message came from Mr. Murray to say that I must meet him immediately, to go and see the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal, who were coming into the corridor with the Queen. . . . Her Majesty bowed most graciously, having the Prince of Wales in her hand, trotting on, and looking happy and merry. When the Queen came to where I was, and on my bowing, and looking, and looking very delightedly, which I could not help doing, at the little Prince and her, she bowed, and said to the little boy, "Make a bow, sir." When the Queen said this, the Duke of Cambridge and the rest stood still, and the little Prince, walking straight up to me, made a bow, smiling all the time, and holding out his hand, which I immediately took, and, bowing low, kissed it. The Queen seemed much pleased, and smiling affectionately at the gracious way in which the little Prince deputed himself. All then passed through the corridor, and after an interval of a quarter of an hour Prince Albert, followed by a servant, bearing two boxes, and having himself a large morocco box, came up to where I was, and told me he had brought the miniatures to show me of which he had spoken last night. Then, in the sweetest possible way, he opened his treasures, and employed more than half an hour in showing me the beautiful ancient miniatures of Holbein, Oliver, Cooper, and others; most exquisite things, embracing a series of original portraits of the kings, queens, princesses, and eminent men of England, and the Continent also, from the time of Henry VII.

* Lady Wallace's translation of Mendelssohn's Letters.

to the reign of George III. . . . At dinner all went on very happily, without any stiffness. . . . There was nobody but a lady and Prince Hohenlohe between me and the Queen. When we came into the drawing-room her Majesty singled me out after a little time, and entered into conversation about the miniatures. I expressed my high admiration of them, and of their great historical value, and praised the Prince for the ardour and knowledge he had shown in bringing them together, and rescuing them from neglect. Her Majesty seemed pleased, and questioned me about the portraits of Bothwell. I expressed the doubts I had stated to the Prince, as to there being any authentic picture in existence, but added, that I would make myself master of the fact immediately on my return, which she seemed to like.

We now give from Mr. Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens** an authentic account of her Majesty's acquaintance with the greatest of modern novelists.

'It had been hoped to obtain her Majesty's name for the Jerrold performances in 1857, but, being a public effort in behalf of an individual, assent would have involved "either perpetual compliance or the giving of perpetual offence." Her Majesty, however, then sent, through Colonel Phipps, a request to Dickens that he would select a room in the Palace, do what he would with it, and let her see the play there. I said to Colonel Phipps thereupon' (21st of June 1857) 'that the idea was not quite new to me; that I did not feel easy as to the social position of my daughters, &c., at a Court under those circumstances; and that I would beg her Majesty to excuse me if any other way of her seeing the play could

be devised. To this Phipps said he had not thought of the objection, but had not the slightest doubt I was right. I then proposed that the Queen should come to the Gallery of Illustration a week before the subscription night, and should have the room entirely at her own disposal, and should invite her own company. This, with the good sense that seems to accompany her good nature on all occasions, she resolved within a few hours to do.' The effect of the performances was a great gratification. 'My gracious sovereign' (5th of July 1857) 'was so pleased that she sent round begging me to go and see her, and accept her thanks. I replied that I was in my farce dress, and must beg to be excused. Whereupon she sent again, saying that the dress "would not be so ridiculous as 'that,'" and repeating the request. I sent my duty in reply, but again hoped her Majesty would have the kindness to excuse myself presenting myself in a costume and appearance that was not my own. I was mighty glad to think, when I woke this morning, that I had carried the point.'

The opportunity of presenting himself in his own costume did not arrive till the year of his death, another effort meanwhile made having proved also unsuccessful. 'I was put into a state of much perplexity on Sunday' (30th of March 1858). 'I don't know who had spoken to my informant, but it seems that the Queen is bent upon hearing the *Carol* read, and has expressed her desire to bring it about without offence, and hesitating about the manner of it, in consequence of my having begged to be excused from going to her when she sent for me after the *Frozen Deep*. I parried the thing as well as I

* Vol. ii.

could, but being asked to be prepared with a considerate and obliging answer, as it was known the request would be preferred, I said, "Well, I supposed Colonel Phipps would speak to me about it, and if it were he who did so I should assure him of my desire to meet any wish of her Majesty's, and should express my hope that she would indulge me by making one of some audience or other—for I thought an audience necessary to the effect." Thus it stands; but it bothers me.

'The difficulty was not surmounted, but her Majesty's continued interest in the *Carol* was shown by her purchase of a copy of it, with Dickens's autograph, at Thackeray's sale; and at last there came, in the year of his death, the interview with the author, whose popularity dated from her accession, whose books had entertained larger numbers of her subjects than those of any other contemporary writer, and whose genius will be counted among the glories of her reign. Accident led to it. Dickens had brought with him from America some large and striking photographs of the battle-fields of the civil war, which the Queen, having heard of them through Mr. Helps, expressed a wish to look at. Dickens sent them at once; and went afterwards to Buckingham Palace with Mr. Helps, at her Majesty's request, that she might see and thank him in person.

'It was in the middle of March, not April. "Come now, sir, this is an interesting matter, do favour us with it," was the cry of Johnson's friends, after the conversation with George III.; and again and again the story was told to listeners ready to make marvels of its commonplaces. But the romance even of the eighteenth century in such a matter is clean

gone out of the nineteenth. Suffice it that the Queen's kindness left a strong impression on Dickens. Upon her Majesty's regret not to have heard his readings, Dickens intimated that they had become now a thing of the past, while he acknowledged gratefully her Majesty's compliment in regard to them. She spoke to him of the impression made upon her by his acting in the *Frozen Deep*; and on his stating in reply to her inquiry, that the little play had not been very successful on the public stage, said this did not surprise her, since it no longer had the advantage of his performance in it. Then arose a mention of some alleged discourtesy shown to Prince Arthur in New York; and he begged her Majesty not to confound the true Americans of that city with the Fenian portion of its Irish population, on which she made the quiet comment that she was convinced the people about the Prince had made too much of the affair. He related to her the story of President Lincoln's dream the night before his murder. She asked him to give her his writings, and could she have them that afternoon? but he begged to be allowed to send a bound copy. Her Majesty then took from a table her own book on the Highlands, with an autograph inscription 'to Charles Dickens,' and saying that the 'humblest' of writers would be ashamed to offer it to 'one of the greatest,' but that Mr. Helps, being asked to give it, had remarked that it would be valued most from herself, closed the interview by placing it in his hands. "Sir," said Johnson, "they may say what they like of the young king, but Louis XIV. could not have shown a more refined courtliness;" and Dickens was not dis-

posed to say less of the old King's grand-daughter. That the grateful impression sufficed to carry him into new ways, I had immediate proof, coupled with information of the still surviving strength of old memories. "As my sovereign desires" (26th of March 1870) "that I should attend the next *levée*, don't faint with amazement if you see my name in that unwonted connection. I have scrupulously kept myself free for the 2d of April, in case you should be accessible." The name appeared at the *levée* accordingly; his daughter was at the drawing-room that followed, and Lady Houghton writes to me: "I never saw Mr. Dickens more agreeable than at a dinner at our house about a fortnight before his death, when he met the King of the Belgians and the Prince of Wales at the special desire of the latter." Up to nearly the hour of dinner it was doubtful if he could go. He was suffering from the distress in his foot; and on arrival at the house, being unable to ascend the stairs, had to be assisted at once into the dining-room.

The political relations of her Majesty to the different parties in the State and her great political leaders are full of interest. We venture to affirm that the Queen has always avoided a party bias, and so, unlike so many sovereigns, has never been a political partisan. She has always been a careful student of the political constitution of the country, and we may almost venture to say, also, a student of international law. Prince Albert systematically studied English constitutional law under the guidance of the best books and teachers, and the Queen was always the companion of his reading and of his thoughts. Being human, she must of course

have had her personal predilections, but these have never interfered with perfect fairness. Her Majesty has always kept her mind singularly open to fresh impressions; and statesmen for whom she is credited with having entertained some measure of aversion have been reckoned among her most faithful counsellors and warmest personal friends. This was the case with the eminent Conservative statesmen, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Beaconsfield. It was supposed that the Queen, when she first came to the throne, was a thorough Whig, and for years she was surrounded by Whigs. But the matter with her Majesty was not a political, but a personal, question. She naturally clung to the friends of her youth. The favour of the youthful sovereign was a prize for which all within the political lists would compete. Lord Brougham, unjustly treated by his party, and politically ostracised by them, entertained hopes that somehow, by the new political revolution, something might turn up for him. Lord Brougham supposed that the Princess Victoria, having necessarily heard so much of him, might have formed as high an opinion of him as the Princess Charlotte had done, and, like that discerning member of the house of Brunswick, might wish to have him for her chief adviser.* The Queen, however, sent for the man who had shown himself Brougham's bitterest foe, and for whom Brougham entertained the deepest hostility. The Queen sent for Melbourne, and for years he continued to exercise all the prerogatives of the Crown in her name, subject only to the control of Parliament. She had a sort of filial affection and reverence for

* Campbell's *Lives of Brougham and Lyndhurst*.

him, and she showed that she was pleased with his captivating manners and with the principles of government with which he wished to imbue her. Brougham felt that for the present all possibility of his being in office was gone.' At this time the Tories not unnaturally became very hostile to the Court. Macaulay, as soon as he got a seat in Parliament after his return from India, declared that he had lived to see a race of disloyal Tories. In the Buckingham Memoirs we find a curious passage in a letter from the Marquis of Londonderry: 'I hear Melbourne says, in all his numerous conversations with the Queen, he never has been able to extract an opinion in what quarter or where she has a predilection. This he has stated with great surprise. It appears to me quite evident, from all I hear in town, that Melbourne knew how to please a woman much better than Peel.*' It must be said, however, that Lord Melbourne, with all his faults, was a thoroughly loyal and attached servant of the Queen. He gave her faithful counsel. Although he probably devised the famous letter about the Ladies of the Bedchamber, which kept him in office in spite of an adverse majority, and prevented Sir Robert from reaping the fruits of a political triumph, yet he was too worthy a man to suffer the Queen's name to be associated with a political faction. M. Guizot, a most careful and accurate observer, writes: 'The Tories returned to Court when the Queen began again to invite them. Lord Melbourne advised the step with liberal moderation, particularly recommending her to pay attention to Sir Robert Peel, "the leader of a powerful party," he

said, "and, moreover, a most able and honourable man, with whom the Queen ought to be on good terms." As a matter of fact, the Queen became on exceedingly good terms with Sir Robert. We have heard the narrative, which we believe to be authentic, that on one occasion, at Buckingham Palace, Sir Robert Peel took up the Prince of Wales, then a child, in his arms, and expounded to the Queen the historic Tory doctrine of loyalty to the Crown, and said that the fate and fortunes of the young Prince were dearer to none than to the great Conservative party, who were especially pledged to the support of the Throne. On one occasion her Majesty honoured the Conservative Premier with a visit to Tamworth.

At the time of the repeal of the Corn Laws a great deal of unusual trouble and difficulty devolved upon her Majesty. When Sir Robert Peel changed his opinions on the subject of Free-trade, he thought it his duty to proffer his resignation. 'In the course of the interviews with her Majesty which took place after my arrival at Osborne, I trust that I satisfied the Queen that I was influenced by considerations of the public interest, and not by fear of responsibility or of reproach, in humbly tendering my resignation of office. Her Majesty was pleased to accept it with marks of confidence and approbation, which, however gratifying, made it a very painful act to replace in her Majesty's hands the trust she had confided in me. . . . The generous support which I had uniformly received from her Majesty, and all that passed on the occasion of my retirement, made an impression on my heart which can never be effaced.' Various explanations passed on the subject of a change of Ministry. Sir

* *Courts and Cabinets of William IV. and Victoria*, vol. ii. p. 288.

Robert Peel mentions in his *Memoir* that when he thus resigned, the Queen mentioned to him her wish that the Duke of Wellington should retain the command of the army. He promised the Queen that he would do all he could to induce the Duke to stay, as his keeping on would be a great source of strength to any Government. The Queen also wished that Lord Liverpool, in whom she had very great and deserved confidence, should retain the appointment of Lord Steward. We now go on with Sir Robert's narrative.* 'I repaired to Windsor Castle at the time appointed. On entering the room, her Majesty said to me very graciously, "So far from taking leave of you, Sir Robert, I must require you to withdraw your resignation, and to remain in my service." In the language of *Punch's* famous cartoon, Lord John 'was not strong enough for the place.' 'I returned from Windsor Castle to London,' writes Sir Robert, 'on the evening of the 20th of December 1845, having resumed all the functions of the First Minister of the Crown.' He immediately called together a meeting of his party: 'A letter which I addressed to her Majesty immediately after the meeting gives an account of what passed at it.' Sir Robert Peel's return to power was not of long duration, as he was thrown out of office by the adverse majority of Whigs and Protectionists, they rejecting by 73 his Irish Protection of Life (better known as the Coercion) Bill. Ireland, he had said prophetically, was always his great difficulty. How deeply Sir Robert in his heart of hearts clung to power may be seen in a letter of his to the Princess Lieven, written soon after that interview with the

Queen which we have related: 'It is a strange dream,' he wrote to the Princess. 'I feel like a man restored to life after his funeral sermon has been preached, highly gratified by such condolences on his death as I have received from the King and our valued friend, M. Guizot.' Had Sir Robert's life been spared, it might have been expected that he would again have reconstructed the Tory party. His very last speech, just before his fatal accident, was in this direction. His sudden death was most acutely felt by her Majesty. She mourned for him as if for a father, and shut herself up for some days, deploring the loss which she had sustained.

Sometimes in the official correspondence of Ministers there are references to Royalty. Lord Palmerston has a few interesting notes about the Queen. On the memorable 20th of June he writes: 'The Queen went through her task to-day with great dignity and self-possession. One saw she felt much inward emotion, but it was fully controlled. Her articulation was peculiarly good.' A month afterwards came the addresses and the Foreign Ministers: 'Nothing could be better than her manner of receiving them; it was easy and dignified, and gracious.' There is a somewhat singular, but very interesting, letter in the Palmerston correspondence, from which it may safely be inferred that the Queen had expressed a playful wish that she could speak in the House of Commons on a subject that was full of interest to her.* Lord Palmerston writes: 'Piccadilly, 18th July 1857.—Viscount Palmerston presents his humble duties to your Majesty, and has had the honour to receive your

* *Life and Correspondence of Lord Palmerston*, by Evelyn Ashley, M. P., vol. ii. p. 348.

* *Peel Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 247.

Majesty's communication of yesterday, stating what your Majesty would have said if your Majesty had been in the House of Commons. Viscount Palmerston may, perhaps, be permitted to take the liberty of saying that it is fortunate for those from whose opinions your Majesty differs, that your Majesty is not in the House of Commons; for they would have had to encounter a formidable antagonist in argument; although, on the other hand, those whose opinions your Majesty approves would have had the support of a powerful ally in debate.

It is a proof of her Majesty's unceasing interest in foreign affairs that Mr. Evelyn Ashley goes on to state that this letter 'drew another and a more detailed communication from the Queen, in which the military measures to be adopted were urged at greater length. The Cabinet were not backward in seconding the wishes of the Crown.' There is no doubt, as Mr. Ashley puts it, that the Queen had desired the removal of Lord Palmerston from the Foreign Office, and had wished to make him Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland instead. The late Lord Lansdowne, in writing to Lord Palmerston, uses the terms, 'knowing as I long have known the extent of susceptibility which prevailed in that quarter on these matters, and greatly lamented, and which I have unsuccessfully laboured to combat.' These facts made it more gracious on the part of her Majesty to offer Lord Palmerston, in 1857, the vacant and most honourable office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. It was not unpleasant to Lord Palmerston that, as Lord Warden, he was entitled to a salute of nineteen guns, whereas as Prime Minister he was not entitled to any salute at all.

When Palmerston went down to Glasgow to be installed an amusing occurrence happened, of which we find mention. There was a club called the Gaiters, with power to add to their number, at Glasgow; and, as the club happened at this time to be entertaining Admiral Sir James Hope, they took the opportunity of inviting Lord Palmerston to become a 'Gaiter.' Mr. Evelyn Ashley then tells the following amusing story:

'It had devolved upon Dr. Norman McLeod, one of the Queen's chaplains, and also chaplain to the club, to propose that the new member should be received. Those who remember his rich vein of humour, and the solemn fun which he kept ready for appropriate occasions, can picture for themselves the manner in which he spoke as follows: "That he had been lately staying at Balmoral; that he had taken the opportunity of informing her Majesty that it was contemplated by the gentlemen he now had the honour of addressing to make Lord Palmerston a 'Gaiter,' and that it was only due to her Majesty that, before so grave a step was taken, she should be asked for her gracious permission. That her Majesty had, after much consideration, replied that although, no doubt, it was a dangerous thing for any subject to be both Prime Minister and a 'Gaiter,' still, considering Lord Palmerston's great services, and, above all, his age and experience, which would preserve him from any abuse of the power conferred upon him, she would, in his favour, waive her objections." The party had broken up laughing, when it was discovered that a *Times* reporter had been present the whole time, and it was feared that he might, perhaps, be a Scotchman,

who had neither undergone operation by a surgeon nor milder treatment by a "Gaiter" in order to admit the joke. Dr. M'Leod had really just come from Balmoral, and, in panic terror lest all he had said might appear in the next day's *Times*, he rushed from the room, called a cab, and hurried to the railway in time to catch the reporter before his parcel left. No doubt the precaution was unnecessary, but the witty chaplain's agony of mind was none the less diverting.

But probably of all statesmen with whom her Majesty has been thrown into intimate relation none has received a greater degree of honour and favour than Benjamin Disraeli, the late Earl of Beaconsfield. Disraeli had much to contend against. For many years he was not acceptable to the bulk of the great Conservative party, who, for want of a better leader, were content to accept his guidance. How well he caricatured the cry of the Tadpoles and Tapers when her Majesty came to the throne—'Our young Queen and our old institutions!' It is said that the Queen was very far from being impressed originally in favour of Mr. Disraeli. Afterwards she did ample justice to the rare and radiant qualities of the man. It was the great distinction of Disraeli that he made a duke, an archbishop, and an Empress. His own ambition was satisfied in being a belted earl and a Knight of the Garter. The Queen accorded him honours which sovereigns have rarely awarded to subjects. She watched over his health, she visited him at his house, she has paid signal honours to his memory. The memorial which she has placed to his memory in Hughenden Church bears an inscription, written by the Queen herself: 'To the dear

and honoured memory of Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield. This memorial is placed by his grateful and affectionate Sovereign and friend, Victoria R. I. "Kings love him that speaketh right" (Proverbs xvi. 13).' Probably some of the best personal memorials of the Queen are among the private papers of Lord Beaconsfield.

The late Miss Wynn was extremely intimate with the late Dean Stanley, and from Dr. Stanley she derived some deeply interesting facts relating to her Majesty. It may be presumed that they are authentic, as they passed unchallenged while the Dean was living.

'He' (Dr. Stanley) 'saw a great deal of Princess Hohenlohe, the Queen's half-sister, whom he describes as charming. She told him that the Prince was not only certain that he should die early, but that he wished to do so. And this wish arose principally from the very high ideal he had always before him, and his feelings of his own shortcomings, and of the difficulties that surrounded him. He would say, "Though I am quite happy here, I look forward to the time when God will call me, where I can serve Him better, and without the limitations which encompass me here." He believed that he was going to more earnest and more devoted work than he could carry on whilst in the body. He was always trying to prepare the Queen for his going first. The Princess says the Queen went out every morning to look at the cows, and go round the farm, because he had been used to do so; that her only comfort was that his spirit was close to her, which he had also assured her would be the case. Lady Augusta Bruce writes out whatever strikes her as being likely to soothe the Queen's grief; and sometimes the

least expected bits have the most effect.*

We have admitted in these pages some mention of other members of the Royal Family. In a book not very generally read—a volume of sermons by Dean Stanley—we find in the appendix an account of the remarkable incidents in the visit of the Prince of Wales to Palestine. An account of the events at Hebron also appeared in the *Times*, and a comparison of the two leaves the fact undoubted that Dean Stanley also wrote the account in the *Times*, to which it is known that he was an occasional contributor.

‘The Mosque of Hebron is, of all the Holy Places in Palestine, the one which has excited in modern times the keenest curiosity, and which, at the same time, rests on the best historical evidence. The effort made by the Prince of Wales in his journey of 1862 gave to his eastern pilgrimage a peculiar value, such as has been attached to the visit of no other European Prince to the Holy Land. The negotiations devolved on General Bruce, the governor of the Prince of Wales . . . Sûraya Pasha offered every other civility or honour that could be paid. The General took his position on the ground that, since the opening of the other Holy Places, this was the one honour left for the Turkish Government to award on the rare occasion of a visit of the Prince of Wales. . . . The shrine of Sarah we were requested not to enter, as being that of a woman. A pall lay over it. The shrine of Abraham, after a momentary hesitation, was thrown open. The guardians groaned aloud. But their Chief turned to us with the remark, “The princes of any other nation should have passed

over my dead body sooner than enter; but to the eldest son of the Queen of England we are willing to accord even this privilege.” He stepped in before us, and offered an ejaculatory prayer to the dead patriarch, “O friend of God, forgive this intrusion.” We then entered. The chamber is cased in marble. . . . But on requesting to see the tomb of Isaac, we were entreated not to enter; and on asking, with some surprise, why an objection which had been conceded for Abraham should be raised in the case of his far less eminent son, were answered, that the difference lay in the characters of the two patriarchs—“Abraham was full of loving-kindness; he had withstood even the resolution of God against Sodom and Gomorrah; he was goodness itself, and would overlook any affront. But Isaac was proverbially jealous, and it was exceedingly dangerous to exasperate him.”

‘Our descent to the city of Damascus was accompanied by the crowd and tumult which always greeted the Prince’s arrival. But it is worth noticing, as a proof of the deeply-seated irritation of the Mussulman population of Damascus against the Powers of Christendom, that, here alone of all the Eastern cities through which he passed, was there any indication of a wish to withhold the respect due to his rank and position. Along the streets and bazaars, many a Mussulman remained sullen and immovable on his seat, instead of rising to salute the long cavalcade as it approached. A message from the Pasha afterwards corrected this unusual sign of aversion to the appearance of a Christian Prince. But the natural feeling of the population was not to be mistaken. . . . Close by our en-

* *Memorials of C. W. Wynn*, p. 295.

campment stood the large deserted house, it might almost be called castle, of the Maronite chief, Sheykh Joseph, who, in consequence of some complications arising out of the late disturbances, had been banished to Constantinople. It was touching to see the excitement and distress of the villagers over the loss of their chief. Wherever we went—especially whenever the Prince appeared—there was the same cry amongst the men, the same beating of breasts and wailing amongst the women, “Restore us our Bey! O, restore us our Bey!” It was after a walk through the village—in which we visited several of the churches and cottages in the place—that we found the stairs and corridors of the castle lined with a crowd of eager applicants, “sick people taken with divers diseases,” who, hearing that there was a medical man in the party, had thronged round him, “beseeching him that he would heal them.” . . . It was an affecting scene: our kind doctor was distressed to find how many cases there were which, with proper medical appliances, might have been cured; and, on returning to the ship, by the Prince’s desire a store of medicines were sent back, with Arabic labels directing how, and for what purpose, they should be used.’

Some interesting anecdotes gleaned from literary by-ways may be given about the Princess Royal. With much diffidence she had sent in a picture to the Art-Bazaar in aid of the funds for the widows and orphans of those who fell in the Crimean war. ‘The Princess had put a very modest sum on her work, to dispose of it privately for a small sum, which she wished to enter as her subscription. The first offer, made immediately as the

doors of the exhibition were opened, was eighty guineas, followed by another of a hundred guineas. The names were entered in the book, it having been previously arranged that the highest offer up to a certain day at noon was to obtain the picture. At the appointed time, two hundred guineas had been offered by a person who was present to hear the clock strike twelve. Just before the hour he said, “Well, I am surprised that there is not more appreciation of so fine a work of art; and that it may not be said that it sold for two hundred guineas, I offer two hundred and fifty,” for which sum he wrote a cheque as the clock struck twelve. The result of the sale surprised the Princess, who had too much good sense, however, to be elated by any foolish vanity, while rejoicing in the success of her effort for the treasury fund.’ Here is an anecdote of the Princess when she first went to her home at Berlin: ‘A Prussian Princess, for instance, is not allowed by her mistress of the robe to take up a chair, and, after having carried it through the whole breadth of the room, to put it down in another corner. It was while committing such an act that Princess Victoria was lately caught by Countess Perponcher. The venerable lady remonstrated with a considerable degree of earnestness. “I’ll tell you what,” replied, nothing daunted, the royal heroine of this story —“I’ll tell you what, my dear Countess: you are probably aware of the fact of my mother being the Queen of England!” The Countess bowed in assent. “Well,” resumed the bold Princess, “then I must reveal to you another fact; her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland has not once, but very often, so far forgotten herself as to take up a chair. I

speaking from personal observation, I can assure you. Nay, if I am not greatly deceived, I noticed one day my mother carrying a chair in each hand, in order to set them for her children. Do you really think that my dignity forbids anything which is frequently done by the Queen of England?' The Countess bowed again and retired, perhaps not without a little astonishment at the biographical information she had heard. However, she knew her office, and resolved to prove not less staunch to her duties than the Princess to her principles.'

We take from an old periodical an anonymous account of an interesting visit to the Castle of Rosenau.*

'We heard the Queen had only just left the Palace of Rosenau, which stands a little way outside the town. Rosenau is an old manor-house, and small for the number of guests it had lately accommodated. 'Twas the birth-place of Prince Albert, and soon after her marriage the Queen and Prince spent a few happy days here together. On the same floor was the room where Prince Albert first saw the light; it was small, and a large bed usurped a lion's share of it. There had been a good many damask curtains hanging about it; but when the Queen chose this as her own apartment, she caused them to be removed, and replaced by others of lighter texture. The little Prince Leopold seemed to have made himself very popular, and he often used to go down to the lodge to play with a favourite dog, which he afterwards carried off with him to England. As we were leaving, the wife of the "Castellan" begged us to come and see the gifts which her Majesty had presented, on her departure, to

* *Churchman's Family Magazine*, 1865.

herself and her husband. The presents were jewelry—I think a brooch and a ring—and they seemed to be extremely appreciated. . . . A gentleman whom we met related to us how that one of his friends was once walking in the streets of Berlin, and he met the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia also on foot, and on their way to the picture-gallery. The Princess invited him, in the most friendly manner, to accompany them there, and astonished him by her knowledge of the schools of painting, the great masters, and the merits or demerits of the various pictures. . . . Rosenau is not the only place in the Coburg territories where our Queen has been received; she spent some time, a few years ago, at Rheinardsbrunn, not far from Gotha. The accommodation at Rheinardsbrunn is, however, scanty, and as the English party and their suite were many in number, the Duke hired a rustic hotel, called the Swiss House, in the neighbouring village, for his own use and those of his guests whom the palace could not contain. Prince and Princess Louis of Hesse occupied a sort of gardener's cottage at the bottom of the garden of the Swiss House. The Princess left her name and titles, written in a clear fine handwriting, in the hotel-book. They seemed to have been rather a jolly party, by all accounts, living in a style which, to those of the number who had been brought up in English palaces, must have appeared very rustic. The long low dining-room the Duke sur-named his skittle-alley—not a bad appellation, considering its shape and bareness of furniture.

'One day, while dinner was being served, the pigs got loose into the garden, and ran grunting about; whereupon the Duke called out

to the Prince of Wales, "There are the German pigs come to greet your arrival to the Fatherland." While the Swiss Hotel was still an hotel for the public, the Prince of Wales in the course of a walk required a light for his cigar, and made his way into the kitchen to ask for one. Not knowing who he was, the cook treated him rather cavalierly, and let him wait her convenience. Her horror and amazement may be imagined, on hearing afterwards that the young pedestrian was heir to the English throne. Quite a modern edition of King Alfred and the cakes.'

The present writer has frequently, in the course of his travels, been, so to speak, on the track of her Majesty. Although his experiences are not beyond those of a great many tourists, yet in their combination they afford some features of interest. He will first speak of nearer experiences before referring to those in foreign countries. He remembers very well a time when he was a student at the Bodleian Library. By an ill chance he was absent on a certain day from his customary cell. 'You missed something yesterday,' said a friend on the following morning. 'The Queen came privately from Windsor to Oxford to see the Prince of Wales, who was then in residence, and she passed down this very gallery of the Bodleian.' The popular progresses of the Queen are historical, as much so as those of great Elizabeth herself; but we imagine that a very amusing and interesting history of her *incognito* journeys might also be written. 'Ah,' said the well-known old gardener at Dropmore to me one day, 'we had the Queen over here last week, and she was comparing our wall-fruit with that of Frogmore.' It was

the privilege of the writer at one time, in the days of the late Mr. Woodward, to have an *entrée* to his regal library at Windsor. The royal children have often been to that library to examine curious and rare books. It was very interesting to examine some presentation copies of famous books presented by some of the greatest writers of the age. I especially remember a copy of one of Mr. Tennyson's works thus presented. At this time a classified collection was being made of an immense number of engravings of every kind which had been brought together by the Prince Consort. We were told of her Majesty's personal messages that had been sent to insure the care and completeness of the collection. I was permitted to see the Castle very thoroughly, but felt little wonder that much care had to be taken against the devastations of visitors in general. They had entirely ruined a grotto which Prince Albert had placed in the grounds, and chipped off pieces of wood from the throne itself in St. George's Hall.

On one occasion I was in the parish church of Newport with one who had accompanied the Queen thither a few days before. Her Majesty had just caused a memorial to be placed to the Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Charles the First. The bars of the prison-house were sculptured as broken, emblematic of the liberation by merciful death. The Queen, we were told, had not said a word, but appeared absorbed in her thoughts, evoked by the contemplation of the subject. 'Perhaps,' said a friend, 'there is not a single person in the whole island who has not profited, directly or indirectly, by her Majesty's residence at Osborne.' I heard of various amusing attempts made

by people to obtain a view of the house and the private grounds. Persons had actually disguised themselves as tradesmen going to the house for orders. One of the most interesting circumstances I know of was a visit paid by her Majesty to the Poet Laureate at Freshwater. Of course I made the customary pilgrimage to Balmoral. There was no chance, however, of seeing her Majesty at Crathie Church. There had been such a mob of tourists that her Majesty had, for a time, given up attendance at Craithie Church, and the service was performed in the drawing-room of Balmoral. It was necessary indeed to guard her Majesty very carefully against the incursions of the British tourist. As the splendid carriages of some of the neighbouring nobility came up they were stopped and interrogated. There were a certain number of detectives in plain clothes about the neighbourhood. Everything we saw and heard spoke of order, comfort, and improvement. The Queen had lately made large purchases of land from Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld. There were fresh paths in the woods, new plantations on the hillsides, new bridges, new habitations. The Queen would herself enter the little shops of Braemar to make purchases, and go to the sick-beds of her poor. Every person in her household seemed thought of by her, while telegraph, post, and messengers connected the remote Highland home with mighty interests all over the world.

Making a visit to Treport once, I strolled onward to the park and château of Eu. From the height of the wonderful old church of St. Jacques, in the picturesque old fishing-town, I commanded the prospect far and wide. Eu was the seat of the Penthièvre, and Louis

Philippe inherited it from his mother, a daughter of the Duc de Penthièvre. It is a low red-brick building, with high tent-shaped roof of slate, built on the site of the castle where William the Conqueror was visited by Harold of Windsor. Louis Philippe enlarged the place, and adorned it with some eleven hundred pictures. What changes the edifice has seen since it was visited by our Queen in 1843! Within less than ten years the Orleanist dynasty had disappeared, and as much as could be of the furniture and pictures were hurried off to England. In 1874 the Comte de Paris resumed possession, and the place has undergone restoration from M. Viollet le Duc. A terrace overlooks the Bresle on its way to the sea; there is a kind of wilderness with arcaded walks of elms, and I happened to be there on one of the days on which a large domain is open to the public. But I take up one of M. Guizot's works, which gives an account of the visit of Queen Victoria:

'I received a call from Lord Cowley to inform me that Queen Victoria was on the point of paying a visit to the King at the Château d'Eu, and that Lord Aberdeen would accompany her. He had only as yet received the information by a letter from Mr. Henry Greville, but he considered the fact as certain. I instantly despatched a courier to the King, who replied on the following day, the 26th of August: "Yes, my dear minister (I begin like Racine's Agamemnon), I have every reason to believe that we are about to receive at Eu a royal visit from Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. She has intrusted my sons, who arrived this morning, with all her messages. She only requires us to keep till the 30th of August a secret which is no longer one; be-

cause, she says, the execution of this project might be impeded by publicity. . . . The Queen intends to be at Brighton on Monday, to embark there to visit some English ports in the Channel, thence to proceed to Treport. . . . We must have plate and china. All here have lost their heads. The rooms are another embarrassment. Fortunately Pickham has a dozen wooden huts, intended for Algiers, which I shall set up in the garden of the church, and furnish as well as we can. . . . It is settled that Lord Aberdeen comes with her. This seems to indicate to us the invitation of Lord Cowley. Have the goodness to render it on my part to Lord and Lady Cowley, and Miss Wellesley. As to yourself, my dear minister, you will come when you please, but I advise you not to let it be later than Thursday, that we may have time to understand each other thoroughly. . . . *You will have to excuse the accommodation, which will be very indifferent. Never mind; all will go on excellently well. Good-night, my dear minister.*" At a quarter-past five, cannon announced that the Queen was in sight. We drew us alongside the yacht Victoria and Albert. We mounted the deck. The King and Queen were mutually affected. He embraced her. She said, "I am delighted to see you again *here*." She descended with Prince Albert into the King's barge. . . . The Queen, as she placed her foot on shore, had the brightest expression of countenance I have ever looked upon—a mixture of emotions, a degree of surprise, and, above all, the most animated pleasure in this reception. There was much shaking of hands in the royal tent. . . . On Sunday, the 3d of September, after Queen Victoria had been present at the

English service in a hall of the château arranged for that purpose, the King took her in a large *char-à-banc*, entirely filled by the Royal Family, to the summit of a tableland which afforded an admirable view of sea and forest. The weather was beautiful, but the road bad, narrow, and full of stones and ruts. The Queen of England laughed, and amused herself at the idea of being thus jolted along in royal French company, in a sort of carriage quite new to her, and drawn by six splendid dapple-gray Norman horses, driven gaily by two postillions, with their sounding bells and brilliant uniform. . . . Lord Aberdeen and I talked, as we drove along, a little of all things. He told me that for two months the Queen had projected this voyage, and had spoken of it to Sir Robert Peel and himself; that they had strongly approved of it, requesting her to say nothing on the subject until the rising of Parliament, to avoid the questions, remarks, and perhaps censures of the Opposition. "The Queen," added Lord Aberdeen, "would not go to Paris; she wished to pay a visit to the King and Royal Family, not to divert herself." . . . The visit ended with all the personal satisfaction and political effect which could have been anticipated and hoped. Queen Victoria departed on Thursday, the 9th of September, for her kingdom, leaving between the two royal families, and the ministers of the two States, the seeds of sincere confidence and rare friendship.'

It is related in a French memoir that when the Queen was leaving Eu a heavy shower of rain fell, and the ground was very damp. There was a space to be traversed between the carriage and the royal yacht. All the French courtiers took off their

cloaks and overcoats, and speedily spread a carpet for her Majesty to walk on dryshod.* A precisely similar occurrence is related in the life of Dr. Whewell, of some noblemen and gentlemen doing the same thing when the Queen visited the chapel of Trinity College. It is curious that Sir Walter Raleigh's famous episode of gallantry should thus be repeated both in England and France. When we last visited the Grand Trianon at Versailles, we heard an anecdote of the Queen's subsequent visit to Paris in the days of the Empire. We were told that everything at the Grand Trianon had been prepared for the reception of her Majesty, but she elected to stay elsewhere. Perhaps the associations with Louis XIV. and the Regency, of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, were hardly pleasing to her Majesty. She stayed at the palace of St. Cloud instead; and before its destruction we saw a picture that hung on the top of the first staircase, depicting her reception there. Going towards the Furca Pass, we were, of course, reminded of her Majesty's visit to the loneliest and least frequented of Swiss passes. The late Frances Havergal, in her last book, mentions with glee how she abode at the little inn where the Queen had stayed, and occupied the room which had been her Majesty's.

I remember well a lovely summer evening which I spent in the beautiful grounds of Mr. Henfrey on the Lake Maggiore, and by the waters of the lake. Here her Majesty stayed for some time, and it is to Mr. Henfrey's other place, at Mentone, that she has gone for the present spring. It is pleasant to recall that one has personal associations both with

Lago Maggiore and Mentone, that help to the pleasant realising of her Majesty's sojourn in those localities. Mr. Henfrey kindly showed us over his place at Baveno, and told us various interesting particulars. Only a narrow strip of road lies between the renowned gardens and the water. Indeed you might almost throw a stone from the villa into the lake. Mr. Henfrey is a zealous Churchman, and his private chapel is an example of all that can be achieved by wealth, taste, and devotion. The chapel was still open to tourists during her Majesty's sojourn, but the hours of divine service were arranged differently for her and her household. Mr. Henfrey, having placed his château at her Majesty's disposal, had withdrawn; but he received a gracious letter requesting him to receive her as his guest under his own roof. Indeed, when Mr. Henfrey withdrew, he did not go far; but, staying at the beautiful hotel, he studied in everything the comfort of his illustrious visitors. It unfortunately rained during nearly the whole of her Majesty's stay, a circumstance almost unprecedented in that Italian climate, and also in the history of 'Queen's weather.' No weather, however, appeared to daunt her Majesty. With the greatest unconcern she wandered through the dripping rain, examining the rare flowers and plants for which Mr. Henfrey's place is renowned. She mainly occupied the drawing-rooms, on the first stage, which gave the widest views and the most perfect seclusion. There are now trees in the garden that were planted by the Queen's own hands. The schools and charities of the place were kindly remembered. The Queen's own personal *souvenirs* to Mr. Henfrey will always be heirlooms in his

* *Portraits Historiques* — 'Victoria,' Par Hippolyte Castet. (Paris, 1858.)

family. It is an interesting and remarkable fact that the wife of the kindly host, who had for many years been in a drooping and declining state of health, seemed to revive and approach convalescence after the epoch of the Queen's visit.

It is a year or two again since we visited Mentone. The little village, still within the recollection of some years, has expanded into a town, stretching along either bay. Still it offers comparative peace and seclusion to those who avoid the gay city of Nice, and the still gayer gambling capital of Monaco. The curtain of mountains limits indeed the area of expeditions, but it screens from the searching east winds of spring. Once there was only a mule-path that climbed the rocky coast, but now the Corniche-road, one of the noblest in the world, overlooks the blue sea, and is overhung by the green, gray, and gold of the woods. The railway system has at last placed even Mentone in connection with all the world. Mr. Henfrey's villa lies not far from the shore, and at a modest elevation of a few hundred feet. It is within half a mile of the curious old town of Mentone, which until lately was part of the tiny principality of Monaco, and a little further from the bridge of St. Louis, the present barrier between France and Italy. Mr. Henfrey was a member of the great Brassey firm, and did much of the most important and interesting of their work. The Queen, in her Mediterranean home, will enjoy the scenery under perfect auspices, and the sympathy and veneration of the people will respect her seclusion. Though the social aspects of the place have changed so much, though the villas climb the terraced heights, and villages nestle on the very

crag, the natural, the health-giving features are unalterable: the freshness and poetry of the great sea stretching away to Africa; the loveliness, the sublimity of the Maritime Alps.

In Germany also it has been my lot to move in the tracks of her Majesty. The beautiful new palace of Darmstadt is almost a reproduction on a smaller scale, and was the Queen's own gift to her daughter and to her son-in-law, Prince Louis of Hesse. One of the most interesting interviews with which I was favoured was one with Prince Louis of Hesse-Darmstadt. I was staying in the neighbourhood of the delicious scenery of the Odenwald, and was fortunate enough to obtain an introduction to him. He was the picture of health and activity, and was fresh from a good deal of forest-hunting. He expatiated on the magnificent antlers of the huge creatures which he had killed the day before. He told me that he had imported both deer and pheasants from Windsor Forest. But what was most especially interesting in the conversation of his Royal Highness was his earnest and sympathetic description of the work of his late consort the Princess Alice. He explained that her work was of a threefold kind. One portion of it consisted of a training institution for nurses; another was a ladies' bazaar, where ladies of limited means sent the work which they had done, with a view of increasing their narrow means; another respected an orphan institution, where different orphans were under the charge of different ladies. Their kindly offices did not cease when these children had grown up, taken situations, and had in other ways disposed of themselves in the world. Their friends, who kept a kindly eye

upon them, studied their welfare, and sought to promote their interests. The Prince said that, since the death of the Princess, the care of these institutions had devolved upon himself, but that he had the assistance of an English lady. He kindly showed me his pictures, his collection of arms, and other curiosities. He was very glad to welcome the English at Darmstadt. There used to be a good many; and though there was a falling off, he hoped that many would come. Living was not so cheap as it used to be; but the houses were good and moderate, and education was both excellent and cheap. He spoke, too, of the educational influence which might belong to the new grand theatre, which was then approaching completion; and in all that he said of the Princess, and what we heard of her good works, it was easy to trace the beneficent influence of her mother the Queen.

Of course, Queen Victoria has had an infinite amount of poetry written about her—some real and some so-called poetry. Two really great poets have written some really good poetry about her. These respectively are Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Alfred Tennyson. Mr. Tennyson's dedication of his poems to the Queen is so well known that we only venture to quote a verse or two:

'And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And through wild March the thrush
calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sunlit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song:
For though the faults were thick as
dust

In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness.'

Of course, Mr. Tennyson's other poems relating to the Prince—

notably the dedication of the *Idylls*—is familiar to all our readers.

Mrs. Browning has a beautiful poem—'Crowned and Wedded.' We take some excerpts:

'She vows to love who vowed to rule, the
chosen at her side.
Let none say, God preserve the Queen!
But rather, Bless the bride!
None blow the trump, none bend the
knee, none violate the dream
Wherein no monarch, but a wife, she to
herself may seem.

Or if ye say, Preserve the Queen! O,
breathe it inward, low;
She is a woman, and beloved! and it is
enough; but so
Count it enough, thou noble Prince who
tak'st her by the hand,
And claimest for thy lady-love our lady
of the land;
Esteem that wedded hand less dear for
sceptre than for ring,
And hold her uncrowned womanhood to
be the royal thing.

And now, upon our Queen's last vow what
blessings shall we pray?
None straitened to a shallow crown will
suit our lips to-day.
Behold, they must be free as love, they
must be broad as free,
Even to the borders of heaven's light and
earth's humanity.
Long live she! Send up loyal shouts,
and true hearts pray between,
"The blessings happy peasants have be-
thine, O crowned Queen!"

For many happy years that union was the brightest, both in its royal and in its home aspect. The prayers and vows of the Queen for her people, and of the people for their Queen, have not been left unanswered. The saddest and most memorable of the episodes of the reign was the departure of the blameless and almost ideal Prince, 'the silent father of our kings to be.' Of that episode we have hardly permitted ourselves to speak. But we may be allowed to believe that it has had, if not its compensations, at least its consolations. It has drawn so closely the hearts of the people to the Sovereign, and of the Sovereign to the people. Her Majesty has

been enabled not only to do her duty, but to do it well. Where else—except, indeed, in her own reign, or, perchance, in Queen Elizabeth addressing her people at Tilbury—shall we find in human history an exact parallel to that noble letter which the Queen addressed to her people on the eve of her departure to Mentone? The words are worthy of being written in letters of gold, as they will be engraved on the fleshly tablets of the hearts of her subjects: ‘It has ever been her greatest object to do all she can for her subjects, and to uphold the honour and glory of her dear country, as well as to promote the prosperity and happiness of those over whom she has reigned so long; and these efforts will be continued unceasingly to the last hour of her life. The Queen thanks God that He spared her beloved child, who is her constant and devoted companion, and those who were with her in the moment of danger, as well as herself; and she prays that He will continue to protect her, as He has hitherto so visibly done.’

We have mentioned how the

Queen’s eyes filled with tears when she showed herself to the rejoicing multitude on the occasion of her succession. The incident was made the subject of a noble poem, by the greatest of English poetesses. Since then the Queen’s experiences of the changes and chances of our mortal life have given a sadder and deeper significance to her tears, and have widened and deepened the sympathies of all good men and women to her. Bearing this higher meaning in mind, we may well conclude with the noble strain of our great lyric poetess:

‘God save thee, weeping Queen!
Thou shalt be well beloved;
The tyrant’s sceptre cannot move,
As those pure tears have moved!
The nature in thy eyes we see
Which tyrants cannot own.
The love that guardeth liberties,
Strange blessing on the nation lies,
Whose sovereign wept,
Yes, wept to wear a crown.

God bless thee, weeping Queen,
With blessing more divine;
And fill with better love than earth’s
That tender heart of thine!
That when the throne of earth shall be
As low as graves brought down,
A pierced hand may give to thee
The crown which angels shout to see.
Thou wilt not weep
To wear that heavenly crown!’

F. A.

PICTURES OF DUTCH LIFE.

BY ELISE A. HAIGHTON.

II.—A. L. G. BOSBOOM-TOUSSAINT.

Mrs. BOSBOOM-TOUSSAINT, who is universally acknowledged as the sun of modern Dutch novelistic literature, was born some sixty-eight years ago at Alkmaar, a little town in the province of North Holland, noted for its cheese-market. The exact date of her birth cannot be ascertained without deeply offending a lady whom all Dutch people venerate too highly to pain. It is a little weakness on the part of this writer to hold certain theories with regard to her individuality, and among these is a keeping secret matters not worth hiding. She does not like to be spoken of publicly, and although she very much likes to be praised, resents even the most friendly criticism. But as she is a prolific writer, and as she publishes under her own name, it is natural that with all the respect shown to her talents and her peculiarities by her countrymen, she should not have been able wholly to escape a certain publicity.

Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint is the daughter of a chemist. A great part of her youth was passed in Harlingen, and she early showed a love of literature. Her first work, written while she was still very young, was *De Graaf van Devonshire* ('The Earl of Devonshire'), an historical novel, laid in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

This was followed by another novel called *The English in Rome*. Both these works were criticised in *De Gids*, a high-class Dutch critical journal, still existing, but at that

time in the heyday of its strength and vigour. The writer of the article was Backhuysen van den Brink, the well-known *littérateur*; and his essay was a critical masterpiece. He stated that Miss Toussaint had been endowed by Nature with all the requisites for historical novel-writing. She seems to have believed him; for a little time after she published *Het Huis Lauernesse*, an historical novel of great merit, which she is universally acknowledged never to have surpassed, though she has written many historical novels since, all of which contain beauties of the highest order. The book made a sensation; her native city was proud of its child, and accorded to her its honorary citizenship.

This writer is a faithful follower of Calvin; her highest ideal is a monkish self-denial and self-sacrifice, that should, however, spring from no binding vows, but from an all-outruling fear of God. A series of novels called the *Leicester Novels* illustrated her convictions, and placed her ideals in the brightest light. Here she treated in full of earnest theories and abstruse doctrines, and she did so in a masterly manner. Still all her power could not save her from striking upon the rock whereon this species of literature so generally suffers shipwreck—the rock of monotony.

In *Abondio II.*, a work less extensive than its predecessors, she proved herself able to portray other characters and other circum-

stances. Abondio II. is the incarnation of moral cowardice: he has not the courage to do those things which he thinks right himself, for fear of public opinion and of being called eccentric. She depicts, with marvellous talent, the many and great evils that result from such cowardice, a feeling so common among the lower classes or inferior minds. After this she returned to her old style. Her last production hitherto is *De Wonderdokter*.

Busken-Huet, at whom we last month glanced, wrote a critical article on Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint's novels. He pointed out all the beauties contained in her works, but at the same time did not conceal the weak points of her talent. She analyses her characters with incomparable psychological truth; her personages are living beings, and their hearts a compound of real human passions. And not only to the reader are her creations living beings. Their author takes the greatest interest in them. This, though it produces admirable results, has also its drawbacks. Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint from time to time makes too great demands upon her readers' attention and interest, by tedious overminuteness in her descriptions of her characters' faintest peculiarities. Indeed, verbosity is her stumbling-block. Thus, if she has to mention a masquerade, a procession, or any ceremony of that kind, she occupies twenty pages or more with the most detailed account of every colour, every flag, every dress. She constantly sins against Lessing's cardinal law, and forgets the due demarcation between painting and writing. Her diffuseness defeats its own end; so overwhelmed are we by words, by a catalogue of details, that it requires no little imagination to construct thence a complete

picture, such as she desires to conjure before our mental vision. This is further obstructed by the fact that Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint's style, though excellent in its own way, is in itself not easy to understand, as it is somewhat affectedly brilliant and overdone with metaphors. Moreover her sentences are exceedingly long, and are written in a mixture of old and modern Dutch. She has studied industriously the masters of the seventeenth century, such as Bor, Coornhert, Hooft, and has tried to familiarise herself with their language for the sake of her historical novels, in order to write them in the Dutch of the period. She has, however, only half succeeded, and the result is often a perplexing mixture of language.

Busken-Huet proved by a number of examples that Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint's fancy was not very rich, and that she was apt to repeat the same ideas and characters. Her ideal, a perfect self-denial for fear of God, is to be found in all her historical novels, now in the shape of a man, now in the form of a woman, now as a young girl, now as a little boy or an aged man. These observations did not please Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint, and incited her to prove that her fancy was richer than one of her countrymen was pleased to think. She wrote a novel called *Mujoor Frans*, the scene of which is laid in a modern Dutch family. The work surprised every one; no one had deemed the author capable of writing in this style. This was followed by a second modern romance, *Lange een Omweg* ('Going Around'). But these modern subjects suffered from the same weak points as her historical works, inordinate length in descriptions and conversations; her gold is apt to be wire-drawn until it has grown almost worthless. Neither can she refrain

from interweaving her stories with abstruse speculations and reflections that check and divert the reader's attention.

In those books of which the scene is laid in modern times, Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint, with few exceptions, does not use the language and expressions of three centuries ago. But, on the other hand, she has fallen into the new fault of mixing her sentences with foreign words and phrases. A foreigner reading her books, and finding every page full of italicised words, would very naturally fall into the error of thinking the Dutch language a poor one, while it is in truth very rich. But Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint has relied upon the fact that all educated Dutch people know French, English, and German, and has therefore expressed her ideas in whichever language was most convenient for its utterance, instead of in the pure Dutch she could write if she took more pains.

The specimen of her writing which we give contains all the author's peculiarities, her merits, and her faults. It has been needful to retrench the sentences, but even so they are long; and reflections have been omitted. The scene is thoroughly Dutch. In the remoter districts of Guelderland, in Limburg and elsewhere, there are many such castles inhabited by poor noble families. The scenery is Dutch, so also is the manner of conversing, Frances' character and her sacrifices, and the portrait of the general. In the country and in little towns, it is, unhappily, no rare thing for the gentlemen to be much addicted to drinking and card-playing. The description of the dinner, too, sparkles with truth. Not that it is usual to eat and drink quite so abundantly as Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint describes; but it is

Dutch to think highly of a good dinner, and to judge people according to their way of living. In Holland there are few people who would ask a friend to come and take pot-luck. As soon as Dutch people invite even a single guest, if their means do not make it quite impossible, a dinner of many courses is provided.

To Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint can also be applied the saying, 'Even the good Homer nods sometimes.' This has been amply proved by her latest work, a novel in dialogue called *Raymond the Cabinet maker*. But she has given to Dutch literature so much that is excellent, that she may be allowed to fail sometimes. Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint has been admitted a member of various Dutch learned societies.

MAJOR FRANCES.

'That is Major Frances,' said the driver, turning round to me.

'Major Frances!' I repeated, halfangrily, halfsurprised. 'Whom do you mean by that?'

'Well, the lady of the castle, so all the people of the village call her.'

The driver begged me to alight. I walked in front of him to find the right way; but, alas, we were at the end of a path at the extreme edge of the wood. Opposite to us were ploughed cornfields, which were rather large, and from which we were separated by a half-dry ditch, in which heaps of dead leaves lay rotting, and all manner of marsh-plants were growing luxuriantly. There was not the least possibility of our reaching the other side from here, and even if we could, where should we be then? On the right hand spread nothing but heath, its undulations covered with firs and pines; on the left hand, also separated from

us by dykes and ditches, lay fields sown with potatoes, whose soft light-green foliage was peeping a few inches above the ground; behind us was the forest that we had already traversed without finding an outlet. I looked at my watch; it was about twelve o'clock, consequently the dinner-hour of the labourers who had business in the fields. No information was to be got; there remained nothing for it but to return the same way that we had come up to the toll-bar, and then to begin once more from the beginning. Suddenly we heard a peal of resounding laughter quite close to us, only the sound seemed to come somewhat from above. I looked up in the direction of the hilly heath. On the top of an overgrown hill stood the person who was enjoying our perplexity.

'Major Frances!' shouted the loud voice of my driver, making no attempt to hide his astonishment and annoyance.

It was she herself, Frances Mordaunt, who was mocking us. Really I had not anticipated such a reception.

As she stood there, some feet above me, but still pretty near, I had a good view of her; and I cannot say that this first glance reconciled me to this person who had already caused me so many disagreeable emotions.

Perhaps that was not her fault; but certainly she need not have equipped herself in such an odd way that we doubted at first sight whether a man or woman stood before us. She had gathered up her riding-habit in a way that recalled Zouave trousers, and she had, besides, put over the tight jacket of her dress a wide cloak made of some long-haired material, which was doubtless very useful this sharp cold spring-day, but which, buttoned up to the throat,

was not adapted to show off the beauty of her form if she was really well-shaped. Her head was covered by a gray billycock hat with a soft downward-bent brim; the blue or green veil ladies generally attach to their masculine headgear, and which would have given her a more womanly appearance, was absent. Instead, a bunch of cock's feathers was fastened negligently with a green ribbon, as if the person who wore the hat wished to imitate the wild huntsman of the fairy tale. Last, but not least, she had fastened on her hat by a red-silk handkerchief tied under her chin. As far as this unattractive fancy costume made it possible to me to judge of her appearance, she seemed to be rather delicately built and slim than rough and manly—indeed, the whole person was the exact contrary of what I had dreamed. I had convinced myself that she would resemble Ristori in the character of Medea, have coal-black frizzled hair, and a face expressively lined. Of her hair I could see nothing, owing to the downward-bent brim of her hat; but, as far as I could judge by that part of her face which was not hidden by the ungraceful covering, she was fair and delicately shaped, with a fine Roman nose. Still it needed more good-will than I possessed at that moment to be agreeably impressed by that face, screaming with laughter and tied up in an ugly red-silk toothache bandage. Her laugh sounded to my ears like a provocation, and made me yet more disinclined to give a proof of courteousness to a woman who had so evidently forgotten all feminine self-respect.

'Listen,' I cried,—'listen for a moment, you who rejoice so much at your neighbour's distress. You would do better to show us how we can pursue our road.'

'There is no road to pursue here. He who enters this wood with any other purpose than to have a walk or a ride, does a stupid thing: that is all I can say.'

'And you?'

'I' she laughed again. 'I sprang with my horse across the dry ditch yonder, between the shrubs—this was my way of getting on to the heath. Imitate me if you feel inclined, though I fear that with a carriage and horse you will not succeed. But where do you intend to go?'

'I intend to go to the mansion De Werve.'

'To De Werve,' she repeated; and now for the first time gave herself the trouble to descend the hill and approach me as nearly as she could, so that it was possible to converse with her. 'What is your business at the castle, sir?' she inquired, in quite another manner than before, no longer in the tone of a somebody speaking to a nobody.

'To pay a visit to the General van Zwenken, and Freule Mordaunt, his granddaughter.'

'The general is no longer in the habit of receiving visitors, and what you have to say to his grandchild you can address to me. I am Freule Mordaunt.'

'I do not intend to beg for any hospitality. I only wish to call at your grandfather's, and to make his and your acquaintance, for I intend to stay a while in this neighbourhood; and I remember that I am related on the maternal side with the family van Zwenken.'

'Still worse, since at De Werve we do not specially suffer from family affection.'

'I have heard this said before, but I am no Rozelaer. I am a van Zonshoven, Freule—Leopold van Zonshoven.'

'And I have never heard that my grandfather lived in friendship

with people of that name. But if you are no Rozelaer, your visit will do less harm; and as a curiosity that any member of the family cares for us, you may perhaps succeed with the general. But it is quite certain that you do not come on business?'

'I can only tell you that I shall assist you as far as possible in your endeavours to keep far from him any trouble or discomfort.'

'That proves your good heart; but if such are your intentions, I hesitate to see in you a member of the family, for such behaviour is totally contradictory to the family traditions.'

'It may be; but you may safely call me cousin, for even in our family there are exceptions, and I hope to prove one of these.'

'If that is the truth, you will be welcome at De Werve; but also as an exception, for as a rule we do not admit strangers.'

'That is a great pity. I think it cannot be your wish to live in such isolation.'

'It is just *my* wish,' she interrupted, with a certain haughtiness. 'My experience is already sufficiently wide to make me have no desire for company.'

'So young, and already such a misanthrope—afraid of the world,' I remarked.

'I am not so very young. I have turned twenty-six; and some of my years may safely be counted as double, just as for soldiers during war-time. You may speak to me as though I were a woman of forty. I have her experience of life. But tell me, what did you take me for at first sight—for an apparition of the wild huntsman?'

'An apparition! Certainly not; that is too ethereal. I thought you a sad reality, a forester who suffered from toothache.'

She seemed piqued for a mo-

ment, her cheeks coloured, and she bit her lips.

'That is rude,' she said at last, and glanced at me with scintillating eyes.

'You wished me to be sincere, and assert you can endure it,' was my rejoinder.

'You are right; and you will find that I have told you the truth. Stretch out your arm, cousin; there is my hand: I think we shall become good friends.'

'That is my sincere desire, cousin; but do not be generous by halves. Allow me really to shake your hand, and not that coarse riding-glove.'

'You are fastidious,' she said, shaking her head; 'but I will let you have your way. Here it is.'

The next instant a fine white hand lay in mine, which I held a minute longer than was absolutely necessary. She did not seem to perceive it.

'But call me Frances; I shall call you Leo. The endless repetition of cousin is so tiresome,' she said cordially.

'With the greatest pleasure;' and I again pressed the hand that now freed itself at once.

No, truly; she was not ugly, even when she had done all she could to make herself look as displeasing as possible. It is true her features were sharp and irregular, but not at all rough or coarse. There was an expression in her face of haughtiness and firmness, that spoke loudly of conscientious strength and independent character; but these qualities were at the same time far removed from vulgarity or sensuality. It was clear that she had struggled and suffered a good deal without greatly diminishing the liveliness and cheerfulness of her spirit. The large blue eyes expressed an open-heartedness which awoke confidence. That they could glisten with indig-

nation, or glow with enthusiasm, I had already experienced.

'Yes, general; I have already carried up the travelling-bag of Meneer van Zonshoven.'

'Indeed! Have you brought a carpet-bag with you?' asked the general, smiling.

'Well, what shall I say to that, uncle? Was it very indiscreet of me to count on a few days' hospitality if I were well received?'

'Of course not—of course not, my boy!' he exclaimed cordially. 'As far as I am concerned, a change will be very welcome to me, only try to be good friends with Frances.'

'Freule has ordered me to show Meneer van Zonshoven his room,' said the faithful Frits, to apologise for following us.

'That is just what I wished to tell you, Leo. Please excuse me for not going up with you myself.' And he parted from me as we reached the great hall.

Frits turned to the left, went up the large oaken-wood stairs that led to the first landing of the left wing, and conducted me just into that part which had given me the impression of not being in a very habitable state. Nevertheless it was an apparently well-furnished room that Frits opened for me, in which, before all else, a large old-fashioned bedstead, with red-silk hangings, attracted my attention. For the rest, I had to grow accustomed to the darkness that reigned here before I could distinguish in what style it was papered, because, from habit, they had only half-opened one of the shutters, although there were three large windows. Frits asked me if I had any orders to give. I directed his attention to this matter, and begged him to let me have more light. He did not stir, but stood as if he had swallowed a stick. Then he said,

'Sir, Freule ordered that the

shutters should remain shut, else the light would be too bright; for there are no blinds.'

'O, never mind; open them all the same.'

'Yes, but also on account of the draught; you see, as we never have guests, we have accidentally forgotten to mend them, and, in fact, there is no glazier in the village.'

I understood him; the number of window-panes was also rather large.

'Well, then, it is all right, Frits; I shall content myself with the light of that single window.'

So speaking I dismissed the good man, whose fidelity to his master was evident by his reticence. The one shutter opened fully let in light enough, and the few broken window-panes were carefully covered with white paper, so that they could not let in much air. Now I saw that the walls were hung with tapestry, divided into squares, surrounded by gilt edges, while the wainscot and the wood-work above the door was also painted and gilt in the style of Louis XIV., but evidently executed by no master-hand; and since no care had been taken to secure it against damp and dirt, both had done the greatest possible damage; and so had the rats and mice, who had gnawed holes in the tapestry. It was the same thing with the furniture. The red-silk damask coverings, and the fringes and trimmings of a splendid couch, which was standing in a corner, had not only lost their original colour, but were in several places so worn and torn that the horsehair showed through. Then, too, it stood on three legs; nor was there among all the high antique sculptured chairs—all equally swathed in red silk—one upon which I could have taken a seat in full confidence. On the other hand, a table with a marble

top stood steadily on its three gilt bear-paws, as if it would defy you to move it; but the top itself was cracked in several places, and here and there large pieces of the mosaic ornament, that represented a star, had vanished.

In striking contrast to these splendid, but neglected, antiquities was a simple modern washstand, of gray-painted wood with light-green borders, that was certainly put, *à mon intention*, just under an oval rococo mirror; yet this had suffered too much from the influence of wet and damp to be fit for use. Fortunately I had a pocket-mirror in my bag, which served me for putting my hair and cravat in order before dinner, for I had heard that the general was very particular about appearances. Frances had warned me that a bell would be rung to announce dinner, and that I must be very punctual if I wished to avoid giving offence to the general and his aide-de-camp, the captain. I was ready in a few moments; nor did I need to inspect my room more carefully than I had already done, in order to recognise that the symbol of all De Werve was 'decayed splendour.' I did not a little enjoy the magnificent view that was to be seen from the single window that could be opened. Looking across the moat, now nearly a marsh, that surrounded the castle, there extended a splendid Guelderland landscape. On the right, at a little distance, stood the ruins of a very old castle, that I determined to visit one of these days. It boasted a heavy square tower, which was still habitable for crows and owls, who made great use of it. The arches, which had enclosed painted windows, were still intact, light and dark-coloured ivy twined around them. It seemed to be a majestic ruin, which I should take care to keep in existence when my

rights to De Werve were ascertained; for I could not cease to look upon all these fine possessions with the eyes of a future proprietor. In a certain sense I was so already, and nothing could prevent me from taking possession of it if —Frances were only willing. The dinner-bell rang; I hurried to obey the summons. I was very curious to see how Frances would look after having dressed herself for the evening, for I expected this, owing to the demands of the general. I should also see in it a good omen for myself, after our conversation in the morning.

The general had already taken his seat, and he pointed out to me a chair next to his at the oblong table, a piece of furniture that had certainly already seen service under the despotic government of my great-aunt Sophie, without having lost any of its solidity, and at which twenty persons could have found room, while we were only to be four. I thought of a *table d'hôte* with four guests. The captain, who was also present, took the seat opposite to me; and Frances, who entered rather flurriedly, sat down next to him; and there, in truth, she was in the same washed-out violet jacket that she had put on instead of her riding-dress as soon as she came home. Her beautiful hair had been put up, with more speed than grace, in a silk net that hung down heavily under this rich burden. A discoloured kerchief was fastened loosely round her neck, so as to hide its slim shape and whiteness; even a simple clean collar was lacking, to give to this neglected toilet an appearance of freshness. I certainly could not expect that she should adorn herself in that short space like a princess in a fairy ballet; but such utter negligence of dress seemed, in my opinion, to bode so little good, that after I had glanced at

her for a minute I turned away my head with a look full of disappointment and discouragement. The naughty girl must have seen something of my disappointment; for she smiled maliciously, and fixed her large blue eyes on me, as if she would say, 'Make yourself easy; I do not mind a bit what you think of me.' For the rest, she fulfilled her duties as hostess with exemplary zeal and great dexterity. She served the soups, carved the meats, and even changed our plates—for Frits seemed to consider his duty done when he had brought in the courses. The two gentlemen, and I according to their example, had to submit to this arrangement, and so she had really enough to do. But you will say that a dinner for three persons, with an unexpected guest, and in the country, in a lonely castle, among people who acknowledge themselves *qu'ils sont pris au dépourvu*, and who, above all, are living *en gêne*, could not require so much waiting; and you would be right. I had thought just the same; but at De Werve everything goes as it should not go, or at least as people would not have expected that it would.

In fact, it was no more than their usual dinner; and yet there was an abundance and a variety of food, and an evident effort after dainty dishes that would have allowed it to pass quite well for a dinner-party. We had, besides the soup, a roasted joint and choice preserved vegetables, 'surrogate of the *primeurs*,' as the captain expressed himself; then partridges in aspic, and a dish of *poulet au riz*, with which alone we could have managed quite well; and young cabbages with baked eels, of which the captain said playfully that they had only gone into his net for my sake. As *plat doux* we had a pudding with a wonderful sauce,

in whose interest Frances was called into the kitchen; and, further, a complete dessert.

The different kinds of wine furnished by the captain, who acted as butler with really too much liberality and variety, completed the luxuries of the table. The wines were of the best brands, and our host, as well as his aide-de-camp, took care that I did not overlook this feature. With apparent gratification he pointed out to me the quality and date of each specimen; and although I did all I could not to appear too indifferent, and to excuse my moderation with the habits of abstinence to which I had been used since my youth, I saw plainly that my want of enthusiasm in this respect disappointed them a little.

But neither the crockery nor the table-linen was in keeping with the splendour of the courses. The first, of French china, dating from the same period as the furniture and the gold leathern tapestries, had evidently suffered a good deal from the rough hands of time and servants, and was not only cracked and riveted and incomplete, but whatever was lacking had been supplied by ordinary ware, which enhanced the splendour, but, alas, also emphasised the deficiencies of the other. The large damask table-cloth, that represented the marriage of a Spanish infanta, had certainly been in use as long as the china. It was exceedingly fine, but worn, and had not always been mended with good results. As regards the silver, certain signs exchanged by Frances and the gentlemen, and the speed with which she sent the forks and spoons into the kitchen and ordered them back, showed me that the dozen was far from complete. On the other hand, there was an abundance of beautiful glass, to which the captain directed my at-

tention lest I should overlook this feature, adding, however,

‘I do not attach great value to such things. Many a day in the campaign I have drunk beer out of a milk-measure, and champagne out of tea-cups; and I did not enjoy it the less for that.’

‘Provided that the cups were not too small,’ interrupted Frances.

‘But the general,’ continued Rolf, without noticing the remark—‘the general is so fond of beautiful things that he would prefer not to drink Yquem if it were poured into a sixpenny glass; and while our major (I mean Freule, the commander-in-chief) always manifests the greatest indifference in this respect, I have charged myself, once and for ever, with the care of the general’s wine-cellar.’

I could do nothing else than compliment him upon his zeal; but at times there was something in his manner of giving the general his title that did not please me—a tone of sarcasm calculated to offend the old man, although he did not seem to feel the pin-prick. He was thus, in a way, reminded of the inferiority of his means to his rank, which probably roused the jealousy of his former companion-in-arms. Any other person would have risen from his chair with indignation, or have revenged himself by a sharp repartee; but it seemed that van Zwenken lacked moral courage, or that he inclined his head to the blow from a desire for rest.

Frances felt more deeply, and was not willing to be so patient. In her vehement way she did not fail to retaliate.

‘Fie, captain!’ she interrupted. ‘You should not proclaim so loudly that you act as quartermaster here. Are you afraid lest Meneer van Zonshoven will not observe how great are your merits? But, you

see, if every one in this house would follow my *régime*, and content himself with our crystal-clear spring-water, your zeal and care for the wine-cellar would be perfectly superfluous.'

I had noticed that she drank nothing but water.

I left the captain sitting with the cognac-bottle before him. He said he needed this spirit to guard against the chill caused by eating fruit. I looked for a moment at the general, who evinced vocal proof that he was enjoying profound rest; and then walked as softly as I could towards Frances, trying to make my cigar invisible.

She raised herself from the sofa, evidently a little troubled at being taken by surprise in a disconsolate mood; but she composed herself almost immediately.

'You can safely continue smoking, cousin, if you wish to have a talk with me,' she said, and at the same time she tried to smile.

'I am not in the habit of smoking in the presence of ladies.'

'Nonsense! I am not so fastidious; you know that quite well. Shall I make you some coffee? The people yonder do not take any; they continue smoking and drinking till—'

I interrupted her with,

'I want nothing else but to talk confidentially with you for a quarter of an hour. Will you grant me that favour?'

'Certainly; it will give me great pleasure. Take that easy-chair, and sit down opposite to me; that is the best position for a talk.'

I did as she bade, and she continued,

'Tell me, first of all, do you now understand why I do not like receiving company?'

'Perhaps. I venture to suppose that you wish to simplify the way of living, and that the gentlemen do not approve of it. Consequently

you wish to avoid the expense occasioned by receiving guests.'

'I shall never let you guess again. After my grandfather had asked for his pension, and we took up our abode here at De Werve, it was urgently necessary to live more economically. Before then we had lived stylishly. His rank required that he, the commandant of a small fortified town, should receive all the dignitaries, as well as all his own lieutenants; and then (let me acknowledge it) we had both got into the habit of living in abundance, and of being hospitable; and consequently we nearly always had an open table, and there was always enough for some unexpected guests. Owing to different events, but most of all to painful family circumstances, our fortune within the last few years has shrunk so visibly that it was not possible to continue living in the same way. At that time grand-papa saw things as I did. To live less stylishly, and still remain in active service, was impossible; but here in the country we could do just as we liked. We did not want to see company, and we severed ourselves at one stroke from all parasites; and although it was a perilous experiment to go and live in a castle like this, with one man- and one maid-servant, we resolved to do so. We further resolved to take only two or three rooms into use, as I did not mind doing a great deal of the work myself. Activity was a necessity to me. I counted on the kitchen-garden, the orchard, and the farm-yard, that in those days still belonged to De Werve, to provide all our wants; and I secretly hoped that, living thus economically, I should be able to lay by some money, and one day to raise this castle from its state of decay.

'At first everything went tolerably well; we came in the sum-

mer-time; we both wanted rest badly; the splendid and varied scenery enticed us to ride and drive out; all combined to make us enjoy the solitude. But, alas, the autumn came, with its cold days and long evenings, when the general, suffering from rheumatism, could not mount his horse. Then weariness overmastered him like a plague, that I tried in vain to banish by music and reading. He was not fond of music, and he did not care for reading. He does not even like to see a book in the hands of those who surround him, except it be an illustrated book, such as are fit for a drawing-room table. When we had read the newspaper we had nothing more to say. Every evening we played some games at dominoes and *piquet à deux*. I could hardly do it any longer; but he never found it enough. There was no one here with whom we could converse. Those who are considered the great people are rough and uncultured, and above all belong to the burgomaster's party; the clergyman is not a man of our sort; and that which is called "an interesting conversation" is not to grandpapa's taste, although he always was *par excellence* the man for social life in a large circle. Now he missed all that he was used to, got fidgety and sad, began to languish, and was less and less satisfied with the simple way of living which I had instituted. I could hardly bear to see him so cast down without having the means of helping him. At that time one of his former comrades, who had also retired on his pension,—but for the purpose of living comfortably upon his means, and enjoying life,—invited grand-

papa to spend some time with him. It would be a nice change, and he could thus breathe without trouble in an atmosphere more to his taste. This captain had taken a house at Arnhem, and lived splendidly, a member of the circle that gave the tone to the society of the town. Grandpapa felt quite at his ease there, and stayed the three winter months.'

'And you?'

'I stayed at home; no question about that.'

The captain had already arranged the card-table, and rang for Frits to take away the tea-things. We took our seats, and the general fixed the price of the counters tolerably high, I thought.

It was as though the old man underwent a metamorphosis when he held the cards in his hands. His dull sleepy eyes glistened with intelligence and sparkled with enthusiasm. Every limb moved; the tips of his fingers trembled, yet still they held the cards firmly, and he inspected them with an eagle eye, to calculate, with mathematical certitude, what was lacking in ours. His pale cheeks flushed a deep red, his nostrils expanded or contracted according to the chances of the game, and the melancholy man, who usually sat with his head bowed down as though overburdened, was of a sudden seized by a spirit of audacity, of rashness, of foolhardiness, that not rarely procured him splendid successes, and reminded me of the saying 'Good luck is with the rash man.' It is with the audacious player.

I put down my money on the table, and pitied the old man who played for the sake of money.

LADY BEAUTY.

Book the Fourth.

LADY BEAUTY'S CHOICE.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE UNDERTAKES TO PRODUCE A GREAT REALISTIC AND DOMESTIC DRAMA, ENTITLED 'THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.'

[In one of the passages of his narrative, my old friend, when speaking of 'Prendergast,' uttered the pronoun 'I.' As this escaped his lips, he tried to catch back his word, and reddened a little. The secret was out, of course; but seeing his confusion, I affected not to have noticed anything. This artifice, however, did not deceive him; and he immediately told me that he was himself the Prendergast of the story, and an old lover of Sophia Temple. I have thought it well to inform my reader of this fact; but for convenience of narration, I shall continue to describe 'Prendergast' as he originally appeared in the tale. To introduce him afresh, speaking in the first person singular, would, I find, embarrass both writer and reader.]

Greatly was Mrs. Barbara Temple disappointed when the day came for leaving Paris, and still Prendergast had made no farther sign. What could it mean? He was the last man in the world to play the coquette masculine; and it was plain that he had assumed the flirtation posture towards Sophia in his sober sort of way. Why advance so far and then stand still? Mrs. Barbara Temple pondered. Then, cries she to herself, 'I have hit it!' Her explanation was this: Sophia had quietly signified to Prendergast, by one of those tokens with which Love's intercourse abounds, that she loved him not. And he, retiring and even diffident, had taken the hint submissively.

'Very provoking of Sophy!' the little woman said. 'Very provoking, indeed! If it would do any good I should lose my temper with her. But it would not do good—not yet. Prendergast was just the man for her. I am angry; but I will keep my temper.'

And she had her reward. To her great joy, no sooner had they returned to Kettlewell than Prendergast appeared on the scene again, and his attitude towards Sophia had not shifted by a hair's breadth. Evidently, then, Sophia had not repulsed him after all.

'How fortunate I did not get into a passion!' the ruler of her spirit remarked to herself. 'It is a good maxim: Never be really angry; don't even seem to be angry often. I should have had Sophy crying, and set her against Prendergast for life, and all on account of my own hasty judgment.'

Prendergast's coming to Kettlewell was in a marked way. He did not stay with anybody, but put up at the hotel; and, when he called on the Temples, he said that he had run over for a few days, in the hope of increasing the pleasant acquaintance with themselves.

Mrs. Barbara Temple beamed on him one of her brightest looks.

'You speak of your pleasure in renewing the acquaintance,' she said. 'You say nothing about ours. I can never forget all your attention to us in Paris. And what a pleasant time that was!'

'Part of my visit to Paris,' he remarked significantly, 'I enjoyed more than anything in my life.'

He spoke quietly; and Mrs. Temple, glancing at her daughter, saw her bend over her little morsel of lace-work with a crimson cheek.

'She knows now, at all events,' the mother said triumphantly.

And when Prendergast took his leave, Mrs. Temple resolved fairly to open her mind to Sophia.

'I have never, Sophy,' she began, 'never in my life seen a man who more takes my fancy.' The door was hardly shut upon him. 'At first I thought him rather dull and, well—sanctified.' Here our little vivacious sinner made the smallest and genteeldest face of scorn. 'But that soon wears off; and I declare that, in spite of my first impression, I find him the most truly lively, entertaining, accomplished man I have ever met. What do you think, Sophy?'

'He is very agreeable,' Sophia said seriously.

'Polite without affectation, witty without coarseness, serious without cant,' Mrs. Temple went on, in true eighteenth-century high style. 'He is a specimen of moderation in all things; and moderation, Sophia, next to repose of manner, is the great mark of a gentleman. A gentleman should be a little of everything, and not too much of anything. Have you ever met so accomplished a man?'

'Yes,' Sophia replied, dexterously affecting not to hear the last part of her mother's speech, 'he is all you say. I like him greatly.'

'I am going to ask him to dinner,' Mrs. Temple said.

'What, mamma!' exclaimed Sophia. 'Company so soon! Wait a little.'

'Not company, child,' the mother answered. 'All alone. He will like it better than a party.'

'And spoil one of our little snug evenings,' Sophia murmured. 'Don't, mamma.'

'Now what is there in our evenings you so enjoy, Sophia?'

'O,' that dear hypocrite answered, 'I enjoy the quiet—and—and our music—and—and your talk, mamma, and all your funny lively stories. You are the best company in the world!'

She put her hands caressingly round her mother's neck; and the mother, who always showed herself pleased with every mark of affection from her daughters, drew one round white arm along her lips, giving it a succession of tiny kisses.

'Poor Prendergast will find it terribly dull at the hotel, Sophy. Really, it would be quite barbarous to leave him there alone.'

'Well, if you must have him, mamma, have some people to meet him.'

'I don't think he would care for that.'

'If he wants society, it is just what he would care for, mamma.'

'But he does not want society,' the mother replied; 'only a little friendly chat and music. Yes,' she added, resolved to carry her point at once, 'I shall sit down and write a note to him this moment.'

The note was sent that evening, but no answer came. Mrs. Temple began to think she must be altogether out in her surmises. But at twelve o'clock next morning, when Sophia was walking in the town, the name of Mr. Prendergast was announced, and he stepped into the room with an apology for the early call on his lips, and yet with an air which plainly said, 'My business is my excuse.' Mrs. Barbara Temple assured her visitor that his call was not inopportune.

'In fact,' she said, with one of her engaging laughs, 'I am famished for a little scandal. Scandal, if you please!'

'My call,' Prendergast remarked quietly, 'is not of that character. The fact is,' he continued, opening his business at once, 'I have been greatly struck by your daughter. I wish to use no flattering language, but I assure you that never, never have I seen any young lady who seemed to me to possess half her attractions. She is a lovely girl!'

He stopped, and a slight moisture in his eyes signified that he was speaking from his heart. Mrs. Temple made a graceful inclination of her head.

'It is always agreeable to a mother to hear her daughter praised,' she said. 'You have not overrated Sophia, as I, who have watched her from her cradle, can tell you.'

'I came to see you this morning partly on your account,' Prendergast continued. 'I know the responsibilities and anxieties of a mother, left in sole charge of so attractive a girl. I do not wish to add to them, and the least intimation of disapproval of my suit on your part will be sufficient to make me abandon it at once, and finally.'

Possibly this grave gentleman, having eyes in his head, may have known that the little mother was dying to call him son-in-law; and this noble speech may have had a trace of humbug in it. But Mrs. Barbara revered this sort of humbug. It was more spicy than reality. She would not have liked Prendergast for really meaning all this civil consideration; but for pretending to mean it, and for uttering the pretence with an air so perfectly pharisaic, she could have kissed him there and then. So, Pharisee feminine against Pharisee masculine, she looked at him with a small and pensive sigh:

'How few men show such consideration!'

'I came also,' said he, 'on my own account. If Miss Temple is engaged, or if she is not likely to look with favour upon me, I had rather know it. At least you might perhaps give me your—your—*advice*.'

Mrs. Temple liked him better than ever.

'Sly fellow!' she said to herself. 'If he dances as neatly as he plays demure, he must make a good figure at a ball.'

Aloud she remarked,

'In these matters I always like to speak with the greatest possible frankness. We are not driving a bargain across a counter. Your offer is to me, so far as I know you at present,' the defenceless woman inserted this attorney clause with the sweetest smile, 'most gratifying. I believe you would try to make Sophia happy, and would succeed.'

It was Prendergast's turn to incline his head now, and he did it.

'As to Sophia,' continued the mother, joining the tips of her fingers in a pondering sort of way, 'that is a much more intricate matter.'

'She is not engaged, is she?' the suitor cried hastily.

'She is not. She is perfectly unfettered. But there has been a sort of attachment; her affections have been—'

'I understand,' Prendergast said with a grave face. 'You wish to break it gently to me. I can assure you I should never try in the remotest way to take from another man affections I should so treasure if they were my own.'

He was speaking his real mind now, and Mrs. Temple looked at him, hovering between admiration and amusement. She had lived in a world of honqur, but not quite honour of this sort;

however, she always made her bow to virtue when it was well-dressed and expressed itself genteelly.

'A most high-minded feeling,' she said. 'Just as I should feel myself. But in the present case such scruples would be out of place. This is only a boy and girl affair; there is no money, no prospect, no hope. I have said myself—kindly, but firmly—that a marriage, or even an engagement, is out of the question.'

'And you do not think Miss Temple's heart is irrevocably given away?'

It was a lesson in posture and grimace to see the little worldling's pantomimic answer. She disjoined the finger-tips, and her white hands with upward palms, her gently raised eyebrows, her shoulders quivering with a scarcely perceptible shrug, her quick significant smile, were each members of an unspoken sentence. The meaning was, 'The female heart—*our heart*—is seldom given irrevocably. Try for yourself.' It was perfectly Parisian.

'In that case,' Prendergast said, reading her like print and with rising spirits, 'I am full of hope.'

'You may be,' she answered; 'but still my daughter is not an ordinary girl. There must be great care. Every step must be taken with thought, and with an end in view. In a word, Mr. Prendergast, I think you had better be guided by me from first to last.'

'I shall most thankfully,' he said; and then he composed himself to listen to his monitress.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE DEMONSTRATES THE PRACTICAL HARMONY BETWEEN TWO GRAND MOTIVES OF CONDUCT—'HONOUR YOUR PARENT' AND 'SERVE YOURSELF.'

MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE was in her glory. For a less complicated or a more immediately hopeful undertaking she would scarcely have cared. Sophia she well knew was not an easy woman to turn, and still less was she easy to beguile. Percival Brent had really taken the girl's fancy. He was more prepossessing with his youth and his generous ways than this grave serious stranger verging on middle life. And the mother had found by experience that affection with Sophia was not mere whim or fancy, much less self-interest or passion. Its roots struck deep. For Mrs. Temple's present purpose the mere vulgar bribes of wealth and ease were not enough: all kinds of motives must be engaged, auxiliaries from innumerable quarters must be united; the campaign must be carefully planned; the advance made neither too early nor too late, just at the moment of fate;

and then the kingdom of Sophia's heart would be won. But all this only kindled Mrs. Barbara Temple into excitement. Marrying Car and Sibyl had been child's play: here was a game for a mistress. She felt the same exultation which a chess-player feels who, long used to engage with adversaries to whom he can give a castle and win easily, sits at last facing an enemy who would win if he got a pawn or a move.

'Everything must be done at the right time,' she said. 'Everything must be done in the right way. Whom can I trust for that? Whom? Nobody except myself!'

First of all she talked to Prendergast herself. Mingling a certain deference for his opinion with unconcealed reliance on her own, she told him that for the present he had better not make any advances to Sophia.

'Rather the opposite,' she said. 'Seem to retreat. Sophia has already noticed your liking for her. Now if you withdraw for a while you will puzzle her. She will say, "Did he admire me after all, or not? Has he, on coming to know me better, found me less attractive?" You will excite her curiosity, which, let me tell you, is a great thing for a lover to do. Besides, although Sophia may not care for you, having once secured your admiration, she will not like to lose it. No woman wishes that a man who once admired her should cease to admire her. She may not care for him—she may even have an aversion to him—but she likes him to care for her. And, I say, if Sophia finds that you grow cooler, she will wonder, question with herself, feel a little piqued; and then if you turn round again and confess her power—well—well—she will be rather more disposed to give you some slight encouragement. Am I letting you into too many of our secrets, Mr. Prendergast?'

'With your knowledge of the heart,' he answered, 'I could have vanquished Cleopatra.'

She bowed, but scarcely took time to taste the flavour of the compliment. No sooner was luncheon over, than, making some excuse for dropping Sophia at a friend's house at one end of the town, she drove out to see Sibyl, the first ally whose coöperation she meant to secure. Sibyl was alone in her drawing-room, and certainly all around were abundant signs of the magnitude of the price she had fetched in the matrimonial exchange. She looked very handsome, quite superb, Mrs. Temple thought, as she rose to meet her mother. But there was discontent in her face.

'Sibyl dear,' the mother said, 'your taste is nothing short of perfect. This drawing-room grows lovelier every day. Where did you pick up that little picture?'

'In Bond-street,' she answered listlessly.

'You paid a price for it, I can guess?'

'I know nothing about prices,' Sibyl answered haughtily.

'And never need,' replied her mother quickly. 'Happy girl!' Sibyl made no answer.

'I have come, dear,' her mother now said, 'to ask your assistance in a very delicate matter. Prendergast wants to marry Sophia.'

'Sophia will not marry at present,' Sibyl remarked.

'Not unless we are very judicious. But with management she will. Prendergast is a man after her own heart, just the sort of man she would have fallen in love with if this ridiculous affair with Mr. Brent's son did not stop the way. Now Sophia must not pass this offer by. I am determined she shall not. Prendergast is very rich, and he is willing to settle down here.'



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'And what of that?' Sibyl asked.

'What of that? Why, here you three girls will be in the one neighbourhood, and that a pleasant one. Each will have a handsome establishment; and think how you will be able to put yourselves at the head of everything. You will soon be the leaders of the county; with your looks, and your cleverness, and your taste you ought to be. You can have your London houses, you and Sophia immediately, and Car when those old people die. You can have your trips to the Continent, your entertainments at home—O Sibyl, why had I never such a

chance when I was your age? How I should have enjoyed the world!’

‘You did enjoy it, mamma.’

‘Now, Sibyl,’ the mother went on, not noticing this remark, ‘there is one thing I wish you to impress upon Sophia: that is the comfort of riches. You can speak from experience; tell her how fine a thing wealth is. Impress it upon her. You might even say, for you know Sophy’s turn of mind, that you find yourself able to do so much good—to help the poor—charitable work—churches—anything can be done with money. That is my special charge to you, Sibyl; the next time you and Sophy meet tell her something of your experience of riches. Now where is Archibald?’

‘He went into the library after lunch,’ Sibyl said rather sulkily. ‘He wanted to read the *Times*.’

Two minutes later Mrs. Barbara Temple was confronting her son-in-law Goldmore, who, with his newspaper laid across his knee, waited to hear what it was of which her shrewd face was full.

‘Sophia has had an offer—at least it has been made to me—from Mr. Prendergast.’

Goldmore bowed his head in a way which signified approval of Mr. Prendergast. Then he said,

‘It would have been a good connection if—’

‘If what?’

‘If Sophia had not fallen in love with Brent.’

‘Now, my dear Archibald,’ cried Mrs. Temple, slapping her hands together slightly in her vexation, ‘surely you know better than that. Sophia has not given her heart away; it is a girlish whim, and we might safely leave it to cure itself, only time presses. Sophia must marry Prendergast; I should die of chagrin if I saw another woman’s daughter get him now. In this matter you can help me. You have weight and dignity, and you speak in a commanding way. Now I want you to press this marriage upon Sophia, from the point of obedience, duty, and prudence. You can tell her how much my heart is fixed upon it; and you might say something about the blessing attached to those who obey the fifth commandment.’ Here our little mother coughed slightly, blessing being rather a foreign expression to her organs of speech. ‘Sophia is a serious girl, and will think of that.’

‘But, Mrs. Temple,’ Goldmore replied, ‘I hardly like to use such an argument with Sophia. From what I have seen of her, I should not for a moment doubt that her conscientiousness is much greater than my own; and it seems rather hypocritical, and even oppressive, to urge upon the girl an obligation for which, as a matter of fact, she has a greater regard than I should

have had myself. Besides, if she really loves this young fellow—'

'A lad without a sixpence, and without a prospect! O, Archibald, you are not giving your mind to the subject! Tell me now'—the little woman faced him like some warrior of argument—'ought not both men and women to regulate their lives with an eye to prudence, common sense, and the main chance?'

Poor Goldmore! Prudence, common sense, and an eye to the main chance had been his laws of life; prudence, common sense, and an eye to the main chance had made him a two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-pound man. His own deities were before him, and he must do them reverence.

'You are a wise woman,' he said; 'I will do as you desire. I will talk over the matter with Sophia.'

'Now,' Mrs. Barbara Temple said, as her trim little chestnuts whisked her along to the residence of Egerton Doolittle, 'I have secured Sibyl and her husband.'

She checked off two fingers.

'I want three more. I shall get them; and then, Sophy dear, I think your future will be safe; and in years to come you will thank your poor old worldly mother!'

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH EGERTON DOOLITTLE GIVES HIS VOICE FOR SEVERE MEASURES IN THE CASE OF HER THAT WILL NOT WHEN SHE SHOULD.

WHEN Mrs. Barbara Temple was ushered into Caroline's drawing-room, she caught sight of the young husband and wife sitting side by side on a sofa. Her coming was evidently unexpected, and Egerton, ejaculating 'My gracious!' dashed out into a conservatory adjoining the drawing-room, while Caroline, composing herself, met her mother with just the smallest signs of momentary confusion. The little woman glanced at two love-birds perched side by side in a cage which hung over the conservatory threshold, and then she recalled Sibyl, sitting in her lonely splendour.

'For some things,' our little Pilpay remarked privately, 'for *some* things a young fool is better than an old sage. But these are only the etceteras of life; Sibyl has secured the grand thing, after all, and more of it than Car. Life is pretty equal.'

'Caroline, my dear girl,' she said after a few casual words, 'I have come this morning to consult you on a matter of the greatest importance. I know your good sense, and the energy with which you can act when you have decided what is right to be done. If it was not for you, Caroline, and your tact and judgment, I should be in despair.'

With this insinuating preface she told the story of Prendergast's proposal ; and after expanding in the most glowing style in praises of his person, character, and estate, she turned to the dismal topic of Sophia's infatuation for that penniless Australian boy.

'For this whim, this caprice, this idea, which is not worthy to be called an idea, she will actually sacrifice a man who is not only a man of family and fortune, but whose character is of the very pattern which she most professes to admire. I protest, Caroline, it will drive me wild.'

'It certainly is unfortunate,' Car said.

'And unless you coöperate with me, work with me, and work hard and wisely too, Sophia will lose the best chance in life she ever can have. I can do nothing without your assistance, dear.'

'I shall do all in my power, mamma,' Caroline replied ; 'but you must tell me what you wish.'

'It was on my tongue, dear girl. You must have a conversation with Sophia—let it seem accidental—and say you have heard about Prendergast. Praise him a little ; but that is not your particular point. Set before Sophy *my* delight at the idea of the marriage ; the happiness it will give me ; how miserable I shall be if it goes off. Sophia is an affectionate girl, and I believe would do a very great deal simply to show her love to me. Now you must put before her strongly my feelings and hopes ; for, indeed, dear, if Prendergast does not marry her I shall die of vexation. Now go over and over this matter with Sophia. You know, Car, she is not like you, clear-headed, of sound judgment, seeing what is right at a glance, and firm to carry out her ideas. She is soft, yielding, tender-hearted. If I were you I should coax her a little, kiss her, be tender with her ; all that will tell with Sophy. Now I know, my love, I have given you a difficult task to perform ; and nothing but my knowledge of your tact would have encouraged me to ask you to undertake it. But you will do it, and do it well. Sophia will marry Prendergast, and the praise of the affair will be yours.'

The little mother had not said one syllable about Car's cleverness which was unmerited ; but however astute that young lady might be, she was like an osier wand in the skilled hands of her mother. With wonderful enthusiasm Car took up the scheme ; and not less wonderful was the simple obedience with which she resolved to follow out the directions that were given her. Independent and inventive as she was in herself, she yet learned her mother's words by heart, as faithfully as if she had been getting up a scene in a play. She did not insert a word of her own ; and the more she showed her readiness to follow her mother's instructions implicitly, the more did that unrivalled student of

human nature laud her quickness, her resource, her capacity for manoeuvre and benevolent stratagem.

Presently Egerton looked in from the conservatory giggling and blushing.

‘I have heard all you have been saying to Carry,’ he said. ‘’Twasn’t listening, I hope. Couldn’t help it if it was, the other door being locked. O Mrs. Temple, do you know I really think you must be a clever woman; I really think you must be. You seem to know everything and to manage everybody. I quite agree with you about instilling things into Sophia’s mind. Impress upon her’—here Egerton teapotted himself, and with outstretched hand began to spout fluently—‘impress upon her the tremendous importance of marriage. Tell her that marriage is the sort of thing that must be done, you know. You can assure her from me that it is tremendously important. And you can tell her that my experience is that it isn’t so much matter whom you marry as the thing itself. Do that, and the rest will follow. Of course I was not speaking of myself quite, you know, not altogether; for Carry is such a tremendously nice girl that I don’t hardly know that I could have found another wife who would have made me so happy—at least, not without a great deal of trouble, you know. But I mean you are to impress on Sophia that, in a general way, it does not much matter whom you marry. And then, if she won’t see it—well, I scarcely know what to advise.’ The stream now became intermittent; and Egerton began to show symptoms of wandering in his mind. ‘I was reading some book lately about a girl that would not marry somebody; and what her parents did was, they shut her up in some tower somewhere, and kept her on bread and water. But you see you have no tower at the Beeches. Still, you might try the bread and water. It is wonderful what diet does.’

Off flew our elderly little Venus once more, charioted hither and thither on the errands and the mischief of love. She knitted her brows, she made her little gloved finger-tips meet, she set a reflective mouth, and thus she conned over the state of her plans.

‘Sibyl is to place before her the comforts and the advantages of wealth; Sibyl will do it well. Archibald Goldmore is to press duty upon her, and take her on the ground of the fifth commandment. I can see him now—slow, solemn, parsonic. O, if I had time to laugh over it, I should. And Caroline will work on her feelings: that will come best from Car, who has not much feeling of her own, because Sophy will reason, “Well, if Car thinks so, there must be something in it.” Interest, obedience, affection. Yes, it is not bad. And there is more to come. Sophia, Sophia, I shall marry you, without a tower, or bread and water either! Simply by tact, dear—by tact.’

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE RECTOR OF KETTLEWELL QUITE AGREES WITH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE.

HER flying wheels next ceased their swift revolutions at the door of the Rectory, and the little woman alighted with the step of five-and-twenty. She shook her head as she marked how the once brilliant flower-beds lay neglected, and the stone steps, once white as porcelain, were turning green with neglect. Dead leaves strewed the path; the blind of the dining-room window hung awry; whatever she saw told her that the enchanter Gold had moved off with his wand to other domains, and that his successor Poverty had already marked all things for his own.

‘I should just like Sophia to see this place,’ our moralist said. ‘It would be a lesson for her.’ She spoke as solemnly as if she had been the pensive and didactic Mr. Herve walking among his tombs. ‘A few months ago everything was trim, and shining with money; now—and this is poverty, pious poverty!’ she said, with inexpressible scorn in her face. ‘I hate poverty.’

The door opened, and instead of the man-servant of other days, well-clad, well-brushed, and obsequious, there stood before her an ill-dressed girl, whose skirts, tucked up on one side and loose on the other, told of work hastily left. Mrs. Barbara Temple noted the red bare arm and the dirty finger-nails; she lost sight of nothing; and all she saw turned into a moral lesson.

‘I like to live,’ she thought, ‘but better be dead than poor.’

As she was going into the library a whiff from the kitchen tickled her nostrils, but not gratefully.

‘Soup, I suppose,’ she murmured again. ‘Well, I have not to eat it, so I need say nothing!’

The part she had here assigned herself was none of the easiest, and she felt she must be discreet and guard her lips. Mr. Brent advanced to meet her, and tried to put on his old cheery smile, but the conspicuous failure made the attempt more dismal than a plain honest sigh. Mrs. Barbara conversed with her usual spirit and gaiety for a few minutes until the question came naturally,

‘Have you any news of your son?’

‘None since the vessel was last heard of,’ he answered. ‘At that time he was tolerably well.’

‘I liked that young man,’ she said. ‘I never regretted anything in my life more sincerely than having to abandon the hope of calling him a relation.’

‘Has your daughter abandoned it?’ Mr. Brent asked, with a faint smile.

‘How kind of you!’ she thought; ‘you have said just the word I wanted.’

'That question,' she answered, 'is one which I cannot reply to as readily as I should wish. We know what young people are; there is always a great deal of sentimentality about them. It amounts to nothing. In time it wears off. While it lasts, however, it makes their management difficult. Of course you are of my opinion, that the keeping up of this engagement, even in the remotest way, would be injurious both to your son and to my daughter. No good can ever come of it, and the sooner it is finally settled the better for both of them. Don't you think so?'

'I do,' the poor clergyman replied.

He had no spirit left. Never a man of independent will, he was now reduced to a mere animated machine, worked in matters of this sort from the outside.

'My daughter has a wild romantic attachment to your son,' Mrs. Temple continued. 'Now you can help me to put an end to this affair. You only can put an end to it, but you can do so.'

'I can, can I?' he replied.

'Yes; tell Sophia that you do not approve of it, and that you consider it likely to be injurious to Percival, which it surely will be. Say with perfect truth also—you can—that you are tolerably certain that even if she remained constant to him he would not remain constant to her. Just fancy, Mr. Brent! a young man, at the most impulsive period of life, thousands of miles away, and with no hope of seeing her for years! Constant, indeed! Why in a fairy tale it would be too absurd to be true!'

He sat before her, passive and receptive, agreeing to everything, promising everything. But, indeed, if the proud Sibyl, and the inflexible Goldmore, and the intellectual Caroline, had bent to her will, little wonder if our poor Rector bent too, broken as his nerves and will were by the one terrible storm of Fate. Whenever she asked him, 'Do you think so?' he answered, 'I think so.' Whenever she said, 'Will you say so to Sophia?' he replied, 'I will say so.' And thus she faced him, energetic, full of plot and will, talking fast, and with frequent action driving her meaning home. An onlooker might have thought the scene a private mesmeric experiment, and Mrs. Barbara Temple the strong and resistless operator, and poor Mr. Anthony Brent the helpless subject around whose volition and reason another mind was coiling itself in swift and powerful folds.

'So,' said our little mother, when this task was done, 'you are to set before Sophia the facts of the case, and its probabilities. You are to tell Sophia that Percival ought not to marry her if he could, and that, in time, he would not marry her even if he ought. Interest, duty, affection, probability. Sophia, I shall hem you in, and force you to yield!'

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE PLAYS THE PART OF MRS. SOBER WITH GREAT SUCCESS.

PRENDERGAST remained to be moulded, and our strategist took care to have an interview with him before the great event of his proposal came off. For this dialogue she assumed a specially grave, not to say pious, air, as she now fully understood Prendergast's habit of mind.

'It is a serious matter,' she said, in the voice and face of her new character of Mrs. Sober. 'Yes, marriage is a serious matter.'

To this sentiment, of which the force, like that of many a popular sermon, lay rather in the delivery than the matter, Prendergast assented, and business began.



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'You are going to propose to Sophia?' she said, in confidential tones; for, indeed, they had chatted the affair over several times.

'I am, with your permission.'

'Very well. Are you above taking a hint?' she paused here, for the most engaging smile made up of self-confidence, self-depreciation, and a coquettish consciousness that all the charms of sex had not yet forsaken her—'are you above taking a hint from a withered old woman?'

'You must be going to take me to consult some elderly friend of yours?' he answered, with successful raillery.

'Capital, capital!' she cried, forgetting Mrs. Sober, and clapping her hands. 'O Prendergast, I do wish you would be

more like that all the day round! It becomes you vastly. O, I should make something of you, too—in time!’

Grave Prendergast could stand this no longer. He burst into a laugh, which our little mother merrily echoed, until she again remembered that seriousness was her part to-day. Turning as solemn as a Quakeress, she asked,

‘But, seriously, will you take a hint?’

‘Seriously, from you I will take as many hints as I get.’

‘Well then, remember this: Sophia is a girl whose head is full of the idea of usefulness and activity, and being elevated, and elevating others, and—you can finish the sentence better than I; for you hear more of that sort of talk. I am not saying anything against all that. In its way, and at proper times, it is very well; but I maintain, and always have done, that it is not



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the thing a woman should live for. Just fancy, my dear Prendergast, what a whole world full of serious people would be! Serious people, and nobody else! Really, I believe you serious people would want a few of us sinners back to tickle you a little! But this is not my business. We must take Sophia as she is. She has not grown up in the way I expected, but she is a good girl, and amiable. When *shall* I get back to my point? Sophia, then, being so full of these notions of service and aspiration and duty, and all the rest, in proposing to her you must fiddle on that string—I mean,’ said Mrs. Sober, withdrawing this rather flippant form of speech, ‘you must let her know that such is your view of life also. It is, is it not?’

‘It is,’ Prendergast answered, divided quite between sincerity

and amusement at the singular little idol that chatted away before him.

'Then be careful you let Sophy know it. And, Prendergast, be careful, too, that you tell Sophy that you have a work in life—I suppose you have—and that she is the woman that can help you to perform it. Present yourself before Sophia in that form, as a man who has a work to do—such a work as she would approve of, such a work as she would do herself if she could. Tell her that she can give you strength, guidance, and all that sort of thing. This is the way such a girl must be carried. We none of us like to be thought mere dolls, dressed for your drawing-rooms, and least of all do girls like Sophia like it. Tell her you will go through the world leaning on her, as they do in pictures, half supporting, half reclining. Tell her that you will draw inspiration from her eyes and from her character, and then Sophia is yours. O, I wish I had been a man, just to teach the rest how to propose to us !'

'Well, Mrs. Temple,' Prendergast said, repressing his smiles with no small difficulty, 'there is a great deal in what you say. And I can assure you that whatever woman I proposed to, or thought I should wish to propose to, I should meditate something of the kind.'

'If you really mean it,' she said, 'it will come a great deal better. It always does.'

'Surely you would not have me say what I did not mean !'

'Fudge, Prendergast, to put it in that way ! In love-making we are not understood to mean what we say. No more than a monarch on the stage is understood to mean what he says when he promises to bestow kingdoms on people. (He has two rooms meanwhile, which he means to keep to himself.) But in this particular case, if you do mean it, why of course you will say it with more emphasis. Ah, dear me,' she added, resolved to efface the impression of her flippancy, 'I daresay you are right, Prendergast, after all, and we wrong. But the world is so pleasant, one can't help loving it.'

She sighed this out so naturally that Prendergast reflected that there must be good in this merry old pagan after all ; and he pleased himself with the thought that before she departed from human life she might rise to a higher mood and confess her follies. So our little mother showed admirable tact, for she gave the finishing touch to her pupil ; and when bidding him good-bye, she asked :

'Now, Prendergast, will you say exactly what I have told you ?'

He answered,

'I will, exactly.'

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE REVIEWS HER CONDUCT, AND THEN LAYS HER DOWN TO SLEEP.

THE labours of the day were over. The whole assault had been planned. In her bedroom Mrs. Barbara Temple sat like a general in his tent the night before the battle. She was reviewing her forces, measuring their strength, settling the order in which they should advance.

‘It is important, however Sophia may affect to despise it, that Prendergast’s wealth, and what it will do for her, should be put before her fairly. I can trust Sibyl for that: no one would manage it better than Sibyl.’

She paused as her first company passed mentally before her to the battle. The array satisfied her. Then she fixed on the next.

‘Duty—obedience. Sophia has always laid great stress on these, and not in affectation either: O, no, she means what she says. Well, I think when Goldmore talks to her about a parent’s authority—I *think* it will move her.’

And so the second company marched past under the general’s approving eyes. Number three came in view.

‘Her affection for me is genuine. Dear girl!’ the little mother said with a warming of her heart, ‘she does love me! Well, what then? I love her, and I am doing the best for her. When Caroline tells her that this marriage will satisfy me and make me happy, I believe she will yield. And Car will do that for me, and do it effectively. O, yes; I trust Car.’

And so company three went by, and was approved. Which was number four? Yes, she remembered.

‘I wonder will Mr. Brent bear in mind what I told him? I think I shall drop him a line to refresh his memory and to bind him to secrecy. If he manages well he might accomplish more than any; but he may blunder—nay, he is the sort of man who will blunder if he can.’

And so, warned by a little frown from the commander, company four went by. Company five—O, well she knew it: with this she was to conquer.

‘Prendergast—Prendergast; he is my mainstay after all. O, yes; he will touch Sophia at the very heart. And he will say all I wish. There is one thing about these serious people: they are half deceiving themselves and half deceiving others, and so they assume a most valuable appearance of earnestness. Now I could not to save my life pretend to be interested in being useful; but I suppose I should be more telling in serious society if I could. Prendergast will sermonise about opportunity and duty, and Sophia will listen, just as she listens at church—I can

see her now—and the woman who listens to a suitor like Prendergast is—married !’

And so the whole army was reviewed ; the forces were irresistible : stroke after stroke ; Sophia would be conquered at last.

‘And now let me see,’ the little mother continued, throwing herself back in her chair as she pondered her own responsibility in the transaction. ‘I am a worldly woman ; I am making a match for my daughter which is worldly-wise—nothing more, and nothing less ; I am doing all I fairly can to urge her to this marriage, pressing her on by every means in my power. Well, am I wrong ? Why, even on the showing of good people or romantic people I am marrying her to a man who is in every way likely to make her happy, although she may not yet acknowledge it. He is good, upright, and kind. And then on *my* showing I am giving her a position in society, snatching her from a mistaken engagement, from years of waiting which are sure to end in solitary disappointment or in wedded poverty. Give me for my daughters a life well carpeted, well cushioned, well furnished, well dressed, and my head for it if in ten years’ time they are not the first to say to the old mother, “You were right, after all.” Yes, the good people talk about doing right and not pleasing yourself ; I do right—and please myself too. Sophy, Sophy, to-morrow night you will be engaged to Prendergast. I shall have done it ; I have done it already. And if you drop a few romantic tears—why, tears are soon wiped off ; but wealth, fortune, position—these remain from day to day, and from year to year, and these make life, let saints and poets say what they please.’

So having settled matters with her conscience in this frank and fearless way, our little mother laid her down to sleep ; and she slept that light semi-conscious slumber common with those who know that upon the coming day a great triumph shall be theirs.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH THE STAGE-MANAGER FINISHES HER DAY’S WORK.

By what complicated mechanism Mrs. Barbara Temple arranged all that happened on this day I must not tell. The description of her successive artifices would fill a volume. Enough to say that she had settled the speeches, the times, the persons, the places in every particular ; the day was, indeed, occupied with the production of the drama of the spider and the fly, and the powerful effects, the incidents, the plot, the traps in the stage, the risings and fallings of the curtain, all were done at the instance of that renowned dramatic authoress and stage-manager, Mrs. Barbara Temple. Having said this, I shall without another

syllable of explanation tell you what happened. All that need be said, and this only for explanation, is that she contrived without any suspicious coincidence to bring each of her subordinates into contact with Sophia between morning and evening of one day, and that the day when—still by her arrangement—Prendergast was to make his proposal. If I were to follow all the windings of this day, the shiftings of scene from place to place, it would be very tedious; and after all, what is my object? First, to declare the foresight and contrivance of our little mother; and secondly, to show how poor Sophia was environed with motives all impelling her to break faith with Percival Brent. These ends can be fully attained by the simple record of certain fragments of dialogue which bore upon the great event of that memorable day.

I. SIBYL AND SOPHIA : MONEY *v.* LOVE.

‘Believe me, Sophy, marriage is a lottery; I don’t think after a month is over love makes much difference.’

Sibyl said this after the mention of young Brent’s name. She was reclining on a sofa, looking very beautiful, but cold, proud, and with plain tokens of disappointment amidst all her disdain.

‘I can’t believe that,’ Sophia replied. ‘You did not always think so yourself.’

‘I was not married then,’ Sibyl answered; ‘I am now.’

It was on the tip of Sophia’s tongue to say, ‘If a girl of twenty-two marries a man of fifty-three, is her view of marriage to be taken as the true one?’

Sophia did not mean, you may be sure, to ask this home-thrusting question in any taunting way, but quietly and reasonably. She felt, however, that such a question must be hurtful to her sister’s feelings, and said nothing at all. This led Sibyl to believe that her argument was taking effect.

‘Sophia,’ she said, in a stern way altogether her own, ‘marry Prendergast. He is wealthy, good-looking, and his tastes are like yours. Now ask yourself, are you not more likely to be happy with such a man, more likely to have your own way and please yourself, than with young Percival? Percival may forget you. If he remembers you, he may be unable to marry you. If he marries you, he may disappoint you as a husband. Just consider the number of chances which have all to come right before you have any certainty with him! And here is a man of whom every one of your friends approves, and whom you admit you respect yourself, making you an offer which I call a splendid one. O Sophy, you can’t refuse him! If you did,’ Sibyl said, growing more and more convinced even by her own argument, ‘you would be silly beyond expression. You won’t disappoint us all, Sophy; you can’t—I know you can’t!’

II. ARCHIBALD GOLDMORE AND SOPHIA : PRUDENCE v. LOVE.

'My dear Sophia,' Goldmore said, taking her hand and speaking to her in a grave fatherly way, and with intentions that were unmistakably kind, 'I wish to say a few words to you about my friend Prendergast.'

Poor Sophia turned red and pale almost in the same instant. A lecture from Sibyl was a trifle compared to this.

'I have known him more or less intimately for years,' the elephantine magnate continued. He talked as if he was dictating a testimonial. 'A more upright, honourable man does not breathe. He is charitable and humane to a fault. Believe me, Sophia, I would not open my lips to you on the subject if I did not in my soul believe that Prendergast will make you truly a happy woman, and that he is worthy of you. I can say nothing more in his praise.'

Sophia began to cry, not knowing where to turn, and Goldmore, taking upon himself almost unconsciously the paternal relation, gently patted her on the shoulder. Indeed, it seemed as if affairs had only to be pushed a little farther for him to bestow upon her a paternal kiss.

'Marry Prendergast, Sophia,' Goldmore continued, repeating unawares his wife's concise counsel. 'You are of course free from all engagement to young Percival Brent. Remember, I have not a word to say of that young fellow but praise. Under the auspicious circumstances of your original engagement I considered it a happy event. And even when he left England, I thought perhaps things might turn out well for you both. Since then I have'—here he reflected on the interview with Mrs. Temple and her charges to him—'since then I have thought things over, Sophia, and I feel you ought to be—*prudent*.'

'Prudent!' 'prudent!' It was the word that had been rung in the poor girl's ears until she was ready to scream at the sound of it.

'And besides, Sophia,' Goldmore continued, 'your mother wishes it. I am far from saying that any girl is bound to consider even her parents in a matter so nearly concerning her personal happiness; but, Sophia, when the man is so very desirable, and when a parent's will is so very strongly expressed, I think a dutiful character like yours will—will weigh the matter, Sophia!'

Sophia was really broken down now and sobbing piteously; and Goldmore, who would not have wounded her without cause on any consideration, judged that these tears were shed over the final wrench from Percival Brent.

'You are naturally agitated, dear girl,' he went on, in his three-syllable style of speech. 'You are a sympathetic nature, and

you regret your late engagement. You are one of those women who are always delicate in your dealings with our sex—more delicate perhaps than most of us deserve. But, now that the thing is done, every hour your sorrow will diminish and your future will grow brighter. Don't cry any more, Sophia; you are acting prudently, and you have obeyed your parent.'

III. CAROLINE AND SOPHIA: LOVE V. LOVE.

'Mind, Sophy,' Car said, 'if Prendergast was an elderly man like Goldmore I would not have had you marry him, not if he could have heeled your boots with diamonds. Don't you see how dull Sibyl is? It is nothing in the world but that she is tired of that old fellow. Now you may not think Egerton very clever or witty; but I assure you he is a capital husband, and I have grown fonder of him than I could have believed. I would not see you so moped as Sibyl, not if mamma were to go on her knees to us. But really, Sophia, Prendergast is more than passable; he is very agreeable.'

'Well, but being agreeable does not make you love a man,' Sophia ventured to say.

'No,' Car answered readily; 'but when a man's character is such as you approve, and when his position and prospects are good, and when he is agreeable in addition, you are safer in marrying him—safer, do you hear, Sophy?—than you would be in marrying after the most romantic of courtships.'

Sophia was silent before Car's reasonable assertion.

'Besides, Sophy'—now she came to her special appeal—'mamma is quite in terror lest you should refuse Prendergast. She has taken such a fancy to him. With his serious ways one would hardly have expected that; but so it is. Prendergast will be making mamma a saint one of these days if he enters the family, he has such an influence over her.'

It was not altogether fair in Car to hold out such a motive to her sister. She well knew how Sophia bewailed her mother's infatuated worldliness; and how, in her gentle daughterlike way, she was always trying to make her mother less of a pagan and a mocker. This one sentence of Car's told more with Sophia than all that had been said to her before. She was in that melancholy mood when women, and men too, often make life-long sacrifices at the bidding of religion. What if Prendergast did really make her mother in her last days a better and a wiser woman! She sighed, and looked up at Car receptively.

'No doubt of it,' Car said, in a kind of reply to her sister's glance. 'Mamma will be the happiest woman in England if you marry him. And she has been a kind mother to us, and we ought

to please her if we can. And, besides, as I said, he may really be useful to mamma, she thinks so much of him.'

Divided was Sophia's heart, and her loyal will was shaken when she left her sister. Who could stand such a succession of argument and appeal? or, if we choose to bring in a new metaphor, what citadel could resist such a number of battering-rams, managed by that eminent pagan military engineer, Mrs. Barbara Temple? Yes; Sophia was feeling the weakness of her sex: '*I faint, 'I yield.*'

IV. EGERTON AND SOPHIA: IDIOCY *v.* LOVE.



AS with sad slow steps she was walking down the avenue, she was startled by the apparition of Egerton, who suddenly appeared, peeping over the top of a holly-bush. He glanced apprehensively round, like a paid assassin in a tragedy, and then, coming round the holly-bush with long secret Tarquin strides, he advanced to Sophia's side.

'Come here,' he said, in an awful whisper.

And he returned behind the holly-bush as he came forth. Sophia did not know what to think; but,

waiving his manner in her estimate of the position, she came to the conclusion that he had got a hedgehog, or some other natural curiosity which he wished her to inspect; so she followed him. No sooner was she at his side than, with three or four more furtive glances, he stooped to her ear, and, in a whisper of the profoundest caution, said,

'Sophia! take my advice, and go and get married. It's an awfully nice thing. You may take it from me that it is not so much matter whom you marry as the thing itself. Do that, and all the rest will follow. Don't let out to any one that I told you.'

And then, with an air of secrecy, which was frightfully suggestive, and the same long and ghostly strides, he made for the house, leaving her to resume her path as best she might.

V. THE REV. ANTHONY BRENT AND SOPHIA : DESPONDENCY *v.* LOVE.

'Miss Temple,' the clergyman said, with a melancholy air, not the least feigned, although, by casting a gloom over his conversation, it greatly furthered Mrs. Barbara Temple's ends, 'times have changed, changed indeed. I had a letter from my son two days ago.'

How that good little heart leaped to hear it! Percival! he seemed near her once again, and she would be strengthened now.

'How is Percival?' she asked gently.

'Pretty well,' the Rector replied; 'tolerably well, I may say. But he writes in bad spirits. Little wonder; his prospects are very uncertain. I don't think he will ever return to England.'

'He meant to come back when he left,' poor Sophia said, turning sick at heart after her little gush of pleasure.

'That I know,' the Rector answered, in the same down-cast tone. 'But his intention will change, if it has not changed already. Percival has to face a life of struggle. I was very glad to find that you and he had quite broken off from each other.'

'We wanted to act prudently,' the poor girl said. O, how delighted she would have been had the Rector, in the remotest way, recognised that an understanding existed between them!

'It was prudent,' he continued. 'To you such a thing could only have meant bondage and disappointment; and to him—well, Sophia, greatly as I like you, I don't really think Percival would have been so likely to prosper had he been still engaged to you.'

'I could not bear the thought of injuring him,' the poor thing said. She was on the edge of a fit of crying, but Mr. Brent, never a man of observation, and now quite occupied with his own cares, did not notice her agitation.

'I am sure of that,' he replied. 'Of course that is why you so wholly detached yourself from him. It is better for both of you. Percival, as you know, has returned to the man with whom he resided when his health was delicate. This man—Warren—is getting advanced in life, and wants a helper in his business. Percival, I have no doubt, will get that appointment, for they are very fond of him—that is, I mean Warren and his daughter are very fond of him.'

'Mr. Warren has a daughter, then?' Sophia asked.

'Yes, he is a widower, and she is his only child. I think—indeed, I know—that she was rather soft on Percy when he lived there. In fact, one or two rather unnecessary letters followed

him to England. I laughed then ; *now* I cannot but think that if Percival manages the business well, and gets into the old man's good books, and—and marries little Bessie, as he used to call her—'

'He called her little Bessie, did he?' Sophia inquired.

'Little Bessie—that was the name,' the Rector answered. 'He always called her that. It meant nothing, of course. You see, they were a great deal together, and Percival says that in the Colonies people are not so stiff as we are in England. He used to say he liked Colonial manners. Well, to return—if he marries Bessie it might be a nice thing for him. Indeed, it will be his solitary chance in life.'

It was a sore, an aching heart that lay in Sophia's gentle breast as she and her mother drove home. The poor girl had not the smallest suspicion that her mother had arranged all these nice little thunderclaps ; but even had she known it, the knowledge could not have blunted the dreadful edge of the Rector's communication. However powerfully her own friends had argued, they could not have affected her as Mr. Brent had done. It seemed as if the father spoke for his son. It sounded like a message from the lover himself, saying 'Let us part.' And in the mists of her fears and doubts the figure of Bessie Warren rose before her, at Percy's side, seeing him day by day, at the head of the household of which he was to be a member, wealthy, and fond of Percy—known to him by a pet familiar name. What chance had she against this fatal Bessie Warren ?

Little Mrs. Barbara Temple was no tyrant, and would not have inflicted any useless pain on her daughter. She saw Sophia out of the side of her eyes as they drove home, and marked her misery, and felt really sorry for her ; but it was sorrow such as a humane surgeon feels for the shrinking patient on whom he is about to operate : it was all for Sophia's good. These tears would flow, and then be gone ; and after the dread and the operation, and the shrinking and the crying, there would be the world—the bright, prosperous world, wealth, fashion, ease, respect—all that station can secure and money can buy. O, no doubt of it ! she was acting the part of a wise mother. And so, quenching her last misgiving, Mrs. Barbara Temple made ready for the final, the winning, stroke in her grand matrimonial game.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEFORE BEGINNING WHICH THE READER IS TO GUESS WHETHER SOPHIA SAID YES OR NO, AND THEN READ AND SEE.

MOTHER and daughter sat down to dinner. Sophia's face was full of care ; but by some accident, or by the caprice of Fate, she was beautifully dressed, and looked very charming in her sadness. The beautiful attire was not indeed very surprising, for Sophia gave such particular attention to dress, and was, besides, such a 'colourist,' that I don't suppose she had an unbecoming gown in her whole wardrobe. To-night she wore a dress of pearl gray with a tucker of white lace round the open front, and a garnet brooch, which I suppose she had pinned in by chance ; but it was in the best taste. Indeed, if the poor heart-sick girl had spent two hours at her glass, and dressed herself for rivalry or conquest, she could not have looked more lovely. Just as an accomplished writer when he is thinking least of form will throw off his most finished piece, so Sophia, who was a true mistress of the art of dress, did this evening, when her thoughts were far enough from the toilet, deck herself out in a way which most of all displayed her charms. Mrs. Barbara Temple marked her as she sat.

'When Prendergast comes,' that keen-witted woman said to herself (having arranged that he was to appear accidentally after dinner), 'when Prendergast comes, and sees you, if the sight does not unlock his lips, he is not the man I take him for !'

Perceiving Sophia's melancholy air, the little mother assumed the same herself. She was taciturn, thoughtful, sighed, and in everything reflected her daughter's sadness. This was supreme high art ; it was saying to Sophia, 'If you are heavy at heart, so am I ; I too am facing a great anxiety.' And so effectually did she play her part that, toward the end of dinner, Sophia, rousing herself by an effort, tried to talk cheerfully. Mrs. Barbara felt a thrill of reasonable pride at this recognition of her power as a successful dissembler. Instead of feeling low-spirited she was, in truth, highly excited in view of her approaching triumph. She felt that Sophia was in her hands. The pensive look, timid voice, and downcast eyes, all told one story to her ; the girl had no resistance left. She would accept Prendergast that night.

No sooner had they got into the drawing-room than Mrs. Barbara asked Sophia to sing to her.

'Yes, mamma,' Sophia said, looking at her wistfully. 'I will sing or play or do anything you like.'

This compliant speech meant, and well the mother knew it, 'If you would only use me for your own pleasure, how happy we

both might be !' Mrs. Barbara Temple understood, but did not regard ; she was bent on marriage.

Sophia sat down, and began her favourite 'Oft in the stilly Night ;' and finely she sang it, the melancholy ditty serving as a vehicle for her own sorrows. Her voice was a powerful contralto, and without at all exerting herself unduly, she was able so to occupy her mother's ear, that Prendergast entered the room unobserved, and was standing beside Mrs. Barbara before she knew it. The little mother gave him a sprightly nod for silent recognition not to disturb the song, and then, slowly turning her eyes from him to Sophia, and fixing them on her, she seemed to say, 'Is she not a woman worth winning ?'

And Prendergast met her returning look with a look of his own, full of tender admiration, which conveyed his thought in reply ; and just then Sophia, ending her song, saw that Prendergast was behind her. Surprise, and some other emotion, sent over her face the loveliest blush surely that ever woman wore, and it seemed to spread until her neck was touched with its conscious hue. Prendergast read it as an omen that at last she had begun to feel kindly towards him, and he could scarcely speak to her for the pleasure he felt. And Mrs. Barbara Temple, who never in her life made a mistake, was ready to clap her hands.

'She loves him ! she loves him !' the little conqueror murmured to herself. 'See what management does ! O, what a woman I am !'

Almost before another word was spoken, Mrs. Temple's maid came into the room, and, advancing to her mistress, said,

'Please, ma'am, is the letter ready ?'

'What letter, Jones ?'

'The letter, ma'am, you said was so very particular, which must go by to-night's post, and which we was to be sure not to forget to ask for.'

This was delivered in recitation style, like something got carefully off by heart.

'Dear me !' exclaimed Mrs. Temple, with uplifted hands. 'How could I have forgotten it ! Sophia, my dear, you must entertain Mr. Prendergast for twenty minutes or half an hour. It is an important letter, and will take quite that time to write. How very stupid I have been !'

And without a glance at Prendergast the very stupid woman left the room, but not until she saw Sophia's blush return with deeper glow.

'Ah,' she thought, 'now for a pretty scene ! O the merry days when we were young !'

When our little mother returned to the drawing-room, she

saw Prendergast standing alone in the centre of the floor. His look told her nothing; but as she came towards him, he said very earnestly,

‘Mrs. Temple, your daughter is an angel!’

Victory! the little mother could have skipped on the carpet for triumph; but recollecting that it would not be business-like to seem too much delighted, she restrained herself, and said,

‘I see. She has accepted you.’

‘No, she has not.’

‘Yes, yes; but that is only a girl’s way; virtually she has accepted you, and you know it.’

‘Mrs. Temple, she will never marry me.’

‘What do you mean?’ The shock was great, and Mrs. Temple found it hard to speak.

‘Simply that your daughter has explained to me her position and the state of her affections. She has been so kind, so frank, so like all I thought she must be, that I am more in love with her than ever. But I know the truth, and will no longer struggle against it.’

He dropped his head on his breast and said no more, and for nearly a minute even the nimble little tongue and versatile little brain of his hostess were at fault. But she collected her spirits.

‘Prendergast,’ she said, in a tone that was dry and even contemptuous, ‘that is not the way to win a woman like Sophia.’

‘Perhaps not,’ he answered; ‘but it is the only way I can follow.’ Even she was for the moment dumb, and he became silent again; but he roused himself, and spoke afresh, ‘The fact is, I have been rebuked to-night. Ten years ago I loved a woman something like your daughter, and she died before our marriage. Over her grave I vowed to live for her memory, and that vow I kept until this year. And to-night, as Sophia was speaking to me, it seemed as if my own buried dear one came from her abode of happiness and bade me—’

‘Prendergast,’ Mrs. Barbara Temple said, with pointed acrimony, ‘the bell is near you. Will you ring for tea?’

It will be admitted by everybody that, from Mrs. Temple’s point of view, her situation was decidedly irritating. She was angry with Prendergast, and bitterly angry with Sophia. To a plotting planning nature like hers nothing is so vexatious as a failure such as this. She was working for Sophia’s good; she had arranged everything so as to insure success; at the last moment Sophia stupidly spoils all! Wicked was the look with which she regarded her daughter, when, after Prendergast’s departure, Sophia shyly stole into the room and took her seat at the tea-table. Mrs. Barbara instantly opened fire:

‘So, Sophia, Prendergast has proposed to you.’

‘Yes, mamma.’

‘And you have accepted his offer, of course?’

The little woman put the question in this way, with a kind of concentrated viciousness which made Sophia tremble.

‘No, mamma,’ the poor girl said, doing what undoubtedly was wisest at the juncture, and breaking into sobs. ‘I could not, mamma, I could not marry him!’

‘Sophia!’ the mother said, rising from her seat and standing before her daughter, ‘you are a weak girl. I don’t say you have done wrong, but I say you are a weak girl. Weakness, of all things, I hate. Sibyl would not have acted in this way. Caroline would not. You have neither sense nor spirit; and it is mortifying to me to think that the daughter who is least like myself, and least dutiful, is the one with whom I must, I suppose, pass the remainder of my life.’

This was a most unkind speech; but we must remember how bitterly the little woman was disappointed; and we must remember, too, that she did not often lose her temper. Sophia, who might perhaps at another time have defended herself, was really broken down by the succession of the day’s excitement, and only sobbed the more. Her mother’s last sarcasm had wounded her indeed.

‘I don’t care for crying,’ the mother went on, quite forgetting her better self and her own maxims of self-possession. ‘Really, Sophia, if you are so determined to have your own way, have the courage too, and don’t stand whimpering there. You can disobey me. You can fly in the face of everybody who cares for you. Then do carry it out. I had rather see you in a passion than as you are. Has anybody injured you? Have you not done as you wish? If you had accepted Prendergast against your will, there would be an excuse for this pettishness and nonsense; but here you have had your own way, and now you must cry over it. It is all weakness—weakness—despicable weakness; and weakness—weakness—weakness,’ she repeated the word in successive sallies of annoyance, ‘I hate and despise!’

Weak and strong they certainly looked. She with her compact figure braced and erect, her stretched-out hand, her declaiming attitude, her clear resolute voice; Sophia bending like a willow, her face hidden, and one low sob following another in reply to her mother’s taunts as they fell on her ear. But before the morning dawned Mrs. Barbara Temple got a lesson which led her to recall her bitter words, and to confess that the strength was not so entirely her own, nor the weakness so entirely her daughter’s, as she imagined just now, while she was standing mistress in her own drawing-room.

(To be continued.)

SOMETHING IN THE MATRIMONIAL WAY.

FACE intellectual—
Colour and tone—
All the accompaniments
Really home-grown.
Eyes—here I hesitate—
Rather like blue;
Black not an obstacle,
Hazel would do.
Nose of the Grecian type;
Not to seem proud,
Some little latitude
Herein allowed.
Figure that's squeezable—
Plump, but not fat—
Steer clear of scragginess,
Could not stand that.
Quiet and ladylike,
Dresses with taste;
Ankle displayable,
Neat little waist.
Round of home duties, her
Element quite;
Piecrust especially
Warranted light.
Common accomplishments;
But, in a word,
Those of the useful kind
Greatly preferred.
Little bit musical,
Able to sing
Claribel, Gabriel—
That sort of thing.
Chatty and sociable,
Likes a cigar;
Pleasant old people, pa-
Pa and mamma.
Pious, devotional,
Gentle, and kind;
Teach in the Sunday school
If she's a mind.
Lady of such a stamp
Wanting a beau,
Strictly in confidence,
Knows where to go.

ANGLING GOSSIP.

WHEN anglers meet they are fond of angling gossip. They fight their battles over again, and even, I am afraid, add to the number of their slain. I for one can listen until the night grows old to reminiscences of stream and lake coming from the mouth of some veteran angler. There is something in the quiet nature of the sport we revere which awakes the observant character of the man. Unknown to himself though it may be, yet the active life of Nature in all her moods leaves its impress upon him, so that at some future time, when the chord of recollection is touched, the things which he then felt or saw are expressed in a form which never fails to be interesting. But as the memory of man is a treacherous thing, which will not work when summoned to do so, but only when it chooses, it is necessary to give it a fillip. If I said to any one of my readers, 'Tell me an interesting angling fact,' he would probably not remember any; but if I told him one he would say, 'Ah, that reminds me,' and forthwith tell me something infinitely better. So I thought that if I strung together at random a few of the angling incidents and pictures which were present in my mind, they would act as reminders to jog the memories of my readers to happy recollections.

I have referred to the quiet nature of the sport; but south-country anglers will hardly understand what I mean by quiet and loneliness, unless they have fished some moorland stream where one must be alone in order to fish it

successfully. In Norfolk a party of us sit in a boat, and are sociably happy. On smaller rivers companions separate on arriving at the waterside, and fish different ways, in order to avoid interfering with each other. All day long you may not see another person, or hear any voice but that of the stream, until you meet your friend at some appointed spot, or at the inn. This lonely sort of angling has been that which I have chiefly followed, and I have grown very fond of it. There is something of the same charm in it that there is in single-handed sailing. One's own skill and strength are all that one has to rely on, and the knowledge of this gives to all sport an infinite zest.

For the variety and excellency of its angling, the Trent is not to be surpassed. The Nottingham style of bottom-fishing is far before that of any other locality. It is reduced to a science of exceeding profundity to the outsider, but is simple enough when once mastered. The first distinctive peculiarity of the Nottingham tackle is the reel, which is a simple wooden pirn, revolving at the slightest touch. The line which such a reel contains is made of twisted or plaited silk, undressed, and of astonishing fineness. For pike-fishing a plaited line of fifty yards in length should not weigh more than three-quarters of an ounce. I tested the strength of such a line the other day, not a new line, but one well used. It broke at a dead strain of nine pounds. With proper care and a good rod no pike that swims could

break it. For roach the line is exasperatingly fine. One hundred yards of it should weigh about two drachms and a half. The breaking strength of a used line was, we found, six and a half pounds. The rod has upright rings, and the line is thrown out from the reel. One can easily understand how a long cast may be made with a heavy pike bait; but it is not so easy to understand how a light roach-float and bait can be cast a considerable distance. Yet it can. It is merely a question of knack. A quick swing or twitch of the rod, and away goes the bait, the reel being prevented from over-running itself by the little finger being kept lightly touching it. Then, as the Nottingham motto is, 'fine and far off,' the float is allowed to glide down with the stream, taking the gossamer line off the reel as it does so, until a great distance is achieved. As some of the holes in the Trent are of great depth, one at Dunham Dubbs being thirty feet deep, it is obvious that it is impossible to fish them with the ordinary float, as if it were set to that depth it would stop the line from being reeled in. Therefore a sliding float is adopted. This is a float made with rings at each end, through which the line freely passes. At the requisite depth on the line, a small noose is made, and a bit of line is doubled two or three times and inserted in the noose, which is then drawn tight. This passes freely through the rings on the rod, but will not pass through the top ring of the float. When the cast is made the float rests against the shot or plummet; when it reaches the water the float remains on the surface, while the weighted line runs down until it is arrested by the knot. When you strike a fish you have not the weight of the float to lift, and

when you are landing one you can reel the line right up, while the float slips down to the plummet.

In the thirty feet hole I have mentioned, one day's sport consisted of seven stone weight of carp-bream, weighing from two to five pounds each, not one of which could have been caught with the ordinary tackle. It might be adapted to pike fishing with a live bait in deep water. One could throw further if the float at the moment of casting was close to the lead. It would only be necessary to have the line to run through the float, and a bit of indiarubber ring tied on the line above would pass through the rings when casting, and keep the float in its place when on the water. The barbel is one of the chief sporting fish in the Trent, and grows to a large size. A friend had some good sport amongst them. One day the take was twenty-nine, another day twenty-one, and another nine—all large fish, the largest being eight and a half pounds. The place where they were caught was a pool in the river, across which a large tree had fallen; and under the trunk of this tree the baits were allowed to float, the line rubbing against the tree when the fish were hooked. Once the line caught in the bark and broke above the float, which was afterwards seen bobbing about. Another line was thrown across it; it was hooked and recovered with a barbel still on the hook. Incidents similar to this occur to every angler. The hooks used by the Nottingham anglers for barbel are also peculiar, in that a loop of silk is whipped on to them, and the gut is fastened to that loop by another loop. The hook is therefore easily removable if blunted or bent, without sacrificing the gut. Also, as the silk loop permits free motion of the

hook, the gut is not worn out at the head of the shank. The worm is drawn clean over the loops. The hands are dipped in dry sand to make the handling of the worm easy. By the way, worms must be unusually plentiful in the valley of the Trent. Each angler takes with him from one to two thousand worms for bait and ground bait for a day's fishing. And now we leave the Trent for a district where coarse fish are not deemed fish at all, but only enemies to be got rid of in favour of trout and salmon.

Reverting to my much-beloved trout, there are more ways of fishing for him than I have time to enumerate. I will ask your attention, however, while I describe one or two. Daping or dibbing with the natural fly is often successful, particularly the improvement upon it known as floss silk line fishing, or blow-line fishing. You fasten a line of the lightest floss-silk obtainable, consistent with the necessary strength, to your reel line. Your hook is small and fine in the wire, and is tied on the finest drawn gut. Your rod should be long and pliant. Your bait is some natural fly, a May-fly for choice. Thus armed you go to the windward side of the river or lake, and let your gossamer line float out on the breeze, so that the fly just keeps touching the water in front of you. A slight lift of the rod top will lift the fly off the water and set it on its travels again. In lake fishing from a boat, this is a very deadly method. You watch where a trout is rising, and let the fly touch just above him. In the May-fly season, the cream of the sport may be had in this way. In Norfolk the advent of the May-fly is unnoticed and uncared for; but in trout-fishing districts men watch

eagerly during May and June for its appearance, for they know that the trout are watching for it even more eagerly, and that when the tempting flies are floating down the river, all the trout are possessed with a desire to eat them.

A trout stream with the May-fly on is a sight to see. In the south of England the trout are much larger, much shyer, and much less numerous than they are in the north. These great fat southern trout are wonderfully well worth catching. They know a thing or two, however, and it is very difficult to catch them. Often have I watched very large ones in the lanes between the weeds of some Hampshire stream. As each fly or other object floats down the stream, they rise leisurely and inspect it; and if satisfied of its harmlessness, they suck it in. As a general rule, the ordinary method of fly-fishing with wet flies is of no avail. A dry fly must be used. Only one is put on the cast; and after each throw it is whisked to and fro through the air to dry it, so that when it falls on the water it floats dry and upright. A rising fish is duly 'spotted,' and the angler sets himself to outwit it, creeping on hands and knees through the lush meadow grass, and casting as if his life depended on the cast.

Of fishing for the Thames trout—that rarest of fish—I have no practical experience; but men spin day after day, and month after month, with an extraordinary patience, and without success or much apparent hope of it. The most deadly contrivance of all both for salmon and trout-fishing is one which is happily now illegal. I refer to the lath or otter. This consists of a board about two feet long, three inches wide, and half an inch thick, jointed in the middle so as to fold

for convenience of stowing. One edge of this is weighted with lead or iron, so that it will just float on edge in the water. A strong line is fastened to this lath by means of a bridle rigged like that on a kite, and a strong stick or rod with a large pirn for the line to tow the lath. The latter sheers out as you walk or row along to any distance. At intervals along the line shorter lines with flies attached are suspended, and these comb the water. I have seen the same plan used for pike on some of the Cumberland tarns, and most deadly it was. Instead of flies, artificial baits were suspended from the line. Another dodge I have seen the miners use in Cumberland is to tie lines and spinning baits to rude toy-boats, and set them to sail across the lake.

Fly-fishing for pike I have known to be practised with great success, particularly in water not more than three feet in depth. A salmon rod and line, a twisted gut trace, and a huge gaudy fly made of corks to float it, red wool and brightly coloured feathers to make it look like some bird, and two or three triangles to do the needful hooking. The fly floats; therefore it can be worked over weeds where spinning or live baiting would be impossible. Pike of all sizes take this fly freely in the north-country tarns, and I do not see why they should not do so in Norfolk. The fly would be a change from the too common roach, which the pike see every day. The most successful baits I have ever used for pike were gold-fish. Near Newcastle-on-Tyne was a pool fed with warm water from certain factories. The gold-fish literally swarmed in this pool, and were of all sizes, up to two pounds in weight. A dozen fish were put in a few years ago, and had increased to such a marvellous

extent that once lately, when water too hot had been allowed to flow in, and some of the fish were scalded to death, a barrow-load was taken away without making any perceptible difference in their number. The owner used to fish for them with a cormorant. It was a pretty sight to see the pool on a fine day. The surface was quite golden with the fish, so thickly were they grouped together. As you drew near, however, they sank down out of sight. We used to catch a few with a casting-net, but most with roach tackle and paste for bait. They played vigorously, and gave a good deal of sport. Most of them were too large for bait for the pike of the size found in northern rivers, and out of a score of fish only five or six would be small enough. However badly the pike were on the feed, they would not refuse live gold-fish, and I have used them successfully when the water has been thick with mud during a spate. It would be well worth the while of two or three of our ardent pike fishers to unite together and get a barrelful of gold-fish brought over and consigned to some small pool for stowage during the winter season. The next most killing bait for pike, as far as my experience has gone, is the eel-tail bait. About nine inches of the tail-end of an eel is cut off; then the skin is drawn back for four inches and sewn down, the exposed flesh being cut away and the skin secured by a string tied round at the point which forms the head. The bait is all the better for being kept in salt, which gives the turned back skin a blueish tint. It may be used with any kind of spinning tackle, and is so tough that one bait will last all day.

I had two days' pike-fishing in Shropshire a year ago which may

be worth mentioning. The first day I went in response to an invitation, armed of course with my rod and a large tin of live bait. To my horror, when we drove up to the place, we saw an array of keepers and watchers armed with nets, and a number of neighbours to see the fun. It appeared that the owners of the river wished to exterminate the pike for the sake of the trout. Well, we dragged about three miles of canal-like river in the following way. A trammel net, long enough to reach from bank to bank, was dragged steadily along by men on both banks. Another net followed about twenty yards behind. The point about this worth noticing was this—that the fish when disturbed all made up stream. They would dash time after time at the net, try to jump it, get under it, or creep by at the sides, but never thought of darting back. There was nothing down stream then to stop them, and if they had chosen they could have swam away free and unhindered, and at a leisurely pace; but no, up stream they would go, and the second net actually caught more fish than the first. We caught a tremendous lot of pike, roach, and dace; but I much regretted the necessity of the proceeding. The other day I alluded to, we went to a pool which is strictly preserved and full of pike. When we got there the boat was locked up, and the keeper was nowhere to be found. Near the banks, the pool was shallow and weedy. It was choked up by that American pest the *Anacharis*, with clear spaces here and there. We tried live baiting with the bait eight inches from the float. In a hopeless manner we fished until half-past two without a run. The water was very clear, and no sign of a fish could be seen. Then, as if by magic,

every little clear place was tenanted by a pike. The suddenness of their appearance was remarkable. They came on the feed, and in an hour and a half I myself had six fish from six to nine pounds each. Then they went off the feed, and there was not a fish visible anywhere, though the water was like glass.

Fond as I am of sport, I yet think it should not take precedence of some methods which the professional fishermen uses with the result of furnishing food to the people and a livelihood to himself. Salmon-netting is legalised, and it is in fact necessary; but the salmon is food for the upper and middle classes only. Now the eel is an admirable item of food which should be available to the lower classes. The Norfolk rivers would furnish an inexhaustible supply if it were properly sought for, and much cheap and good food for the people would be the result. Now a good many anglers object to the eel-sets, because they are said to catch other fish besides eels. Now if you will bear in mind the fact I ascertained in my pike-netting expedition, that fish always strike up stream when alarmed by the net, you will perhaps agree with me that they are not likely to float down into the pocket of an eel-net with the wide mouth open up stream for them. I have made careful inquiries on the rivers, and find that while fish are sometimes caught in these nets, the numbers of fish so caught are comparatively small; and you must remember this: that, putting aside another consideration I shall presently allude to, the number of fish so caught and not returned to the water would, even if the eel-sets were multiplied many times, not make one per cent difference to the angler's sport, and I think

no one would grudge one fish out of the hundred he may catch and throw away for the sake of increasing a good and cheap food supply. But I firmly believe that the eel-sets are a great benefit to the angler. It must be remembered that no fish is so destructive to other fish as the eel. Where the pike eats its tens of fish, the eel eats its tens of thousands of fish in the shape of spawn ; and the more the eels in the river are kept down, the better the angler's sport would be. Therefore, I plead that in any further legislation affecting southern waters the following points should be kept in mind :

1. That there is an abundant harvest of good food in our waters

which is not only now wasted, but is in itself injurious to our sport by being left in the water.

2. That with proper encouragement the industry of eel-catching could be exercised so as to be a benefit to the poorer classes of the community in providing them with cheap food, and a benefit to anglers by removing the destroyers of fish.

3. That the use of eel-nets or other instruments for catching eels, including nightlines, should be permitted under regulations which should provide for the granting of licenses at small charges, and the periodical inspection of the fishing establishments.

G. CHRISTOPHER DAVIES.

APRIL FOOLS.

WHAT can we gather
Fairest to-day ?
Yellow-faced blossoms
Smiling and gay,
These shall we scatter
Over Spring's way ?

April was ever
Chance's poor tool ;
Showers and sunshine
Laugh at his rule :
Man was a monkey,
Now he's a fool !

Twitter of birdlings
Heedlessly wed
Puts all slow music
Out of our head ;
Whistle and caper—
Winter is dead !

Head over heels, O,
Turn if you can ;
Be for once merry,
Pipe with old Pan ;
Laugh like an elf, don't
Groan like a man !

A. NORMAN FOHUR.

BONES,

The April Fool of Harberg's Sluice.

ABE DURTON's cabin was not beautiful. People have been heard to assert that it was ugly, and, even after the fashion of Harvey's Sluice, have gone the length of prefixing their adjective with a forcible expletive which emphasised their criticism. Abe, however, was a stolid and easy-going man, on whose mind the remarks of an unappreciative public made but little impression. He had built the house himself, and it suited his partner and him, and what more did they want? Indeed he was rather touchy upon the subject. 'Though I says it as raised it,' he remarked, 'it'll lay over any shanty in the valley. Holes? Well, of course there are holes. You wouldn't get fresh air without holes. There's nothing stuffy about *my* house. Rain? Well, if it does let the rain in, ain't it an advantage to know its rainin' without gettin' up to unbar the door. I wouldn't own a house that didn't leak some. As to its bein' off the perpendic'lar, I like a house with a bit of a tilt. Anyways it pleases my pard, Boss Morgan, and what's good enough for him is good enough for you, I suppose.' At which approach to personalities his antagonist usually sheered off, and left the honours of the field to the indignant architect.

But whatever difference of opinion might exist as to the beauty of the establishment, there could be no question as to its utility. To the tired wayfarer, plodding along the Buckhurst-

road in the direction of the Sluice, the warm glow upon the summit of the hill was a beacon of hope and of comfort. Those very holes at which the neighbours sneered helped to diffuse a cheery atmosphere of light around, which was doubly acceptable on such a night as the present.

There was only one man inside the hut, and that was the proprietor, Abe Durton himself, or 'Bones,' as he had been christened with the rude heraldry of the camp. He was sitting in front of the great wood fire, gazing moodily into its glowing depths, and occasionally giving a faggot a kick of remonstrance when it showed any indication of dying into a smoulder. His fair Saxon face, with its bold simple eyes and crisp yellow beard, stood out sharp and clear against the darkness as the flickering light played over it. It was a manly resolute countenance, and yet the physiognomist might have detected something in the lines of the mouth which showed a weakness somewhere, an indecision which contrasted strangely with his herculean shoulders and massive limbs. Abe's was one of those trusting simple natures which are as easy to lead as they are impossible to drive; and it was this happy pliability of disposition which made him at once the butt and the favourite of the dwellers in the Sluice. Badinage in that primitive settlement was of a somewhat ponderous character, yet no amount of chaff had ever

brought a dark look on Bones's face, or an unkind thought into his honest heart. It was only when his aristocratic partner was, as he thought, being put upon, that an ominous tightness about his lower lip and an angry light in his blue eyes caused even the most irrepressible humorist in the colony to nip his favourite joke in the bud, in order to diverge into an earnest and all-absorbing dissertation upon the state of the weather.

'The Boss is late to-night,' he muttered as he rose from his chair and stretched himself in a colossal yawn. 'My stars, how it does rain and blow! Don't it, Blinky? Blinky was a demure and meditative owl, whose comfort and welfare was a chronic subject of solicitude to its master, and who at present contemplated him gravely from one of the rafters. 'Pity you can't speak, Blinky,' continued Abe, glancing up at his feathered companion. 'There's a powerful deal of sense in your face. Kinder melancholy too. Crossed in love, maybe, when you was young. Talkin' of love,' he added, 'I've not seen Susan to-day,' and lighting the candle which stood in a black bottle upon the table, he walked across the room and peered earnestly at one of the many pictures from stray illustrated papers, which had been cut out by the occupants and posted up upon the walls.

The particular picture which attracted him was one which represented a very tawdrily-dressed actress simpering over a bouquet at an imaginary audience. This sketch had, for some inscrutable reason, made a deep impression upon the susceptible heart of the miner. He had invested the young lady with a human interest by solemnly, and without the slightest warrant, christening her as

Susan Banks, and had then installed her as his standard of female beauty.

'You see my Susan,' he would say, when some wanderer from Buckhurst, or even from Melbourne, would describe some fair Circe whom he had left behind him. 'There ain't a girl like my Sue. If ever you go to the old country again, just you ask to see her. Susan Banks is her name, and I've got her picture up at the shanty.'

Abe was still gazing at his charmer when the rough door was flung open, and a blinding cloud of sleet and rain came driving into the cabin, almost obscuring for the moment a young man who sprang in and proceeded to bar the entrance behind him, an operation which the force of the wind rendered no easy matter. He might have passed for the genius of the storm, with the water dripping from his long hair and running down his pale refined face.

'Well,' he said, in a slightly peevish voice, 'haven't you got any supper?'

'Waiting and ready,' said his companion cheerily, pointing to a large pot which bubbled by the side of the fire. 'You seem sort of damp.'

'Damp be hanged! I'm soaked, man, thoroughly saturated. It's a night that I wouldn't have a dog out, at least not a dog that I had any respect for. Hand over that dry coat from the peg.'

Jack Morgan, or Boss, as he was usually called, belonged to a type which was commoner in the mines during the flush times of the first great rush than would be supposed. He was a man of good blood, liberally educated, and a graduate of an English university. Boss should, in the natural course of things, have been an energetic

curate, or struggling professional man, had not some latent traits cropped out in his character, inherited possibly from old Sir Henry Morgan, who had founded the family with Spanish pieces of eight gallantly won upon the high seas. It was this wild strain of blood no doubt which had caused him to drop from the bedroom-window of the ivy-clad English parsonage, and leave home and friends behind him, to try his luck with pick and shovel in the Australian fields. In spite of his effeminate face and dainty manners, the rough dwellers in Harvey's Sluice had gradually learned that the little man was possessed of a cool courage and unflinching resolution, which won respect in a community where pluck was looked upon as the highest of human attributes. No one ever knew how it was that Bones and he had become partners; yet partners they were, and the large simple nature of the stronger man looked with an almost superstitious reverence upon the clear decisive mind of his companion.

'That's better,' said the Boss, as he dropped into the vacant chair before the fire and watched Abe laying out the two metal plates, with the horn-handled knives and abnormally pronged forks. 'Take your mining boots off, Bones; there's no use filling the cabin with red clay. Come here and sit down.'

His gigantic partner came meekly over and perched himself upon the top of a barrel.

'What's up?' he asked.

'Shares are up,' said his companion. 'That's what's up. Look here,' and he extracted a crumpled paper from the pocket of the steaming coat. 'Here's the *Buckhurst Sentinel*. Read this article—this one here about a paying lead in the Conemara mine. We

hold pretty heavily in that concern, my boy. We might sell out to-day and clear something—but, I think we'll hold on.'

Abe Durtion in the mean time was laboriously spelling out the article in question, following the lines with his great forefinger, and muttering under his tawny moustache.

'Two hundred dollars a foot,' he said, looking up. 'Why, pard, we hold a hundred feet each. It would give us twenty thousand dollars! We might go home on that.'

'Nonsense!' said his companion; 'we've come out here for something better than a beggarly couple of thousand pounds. The thing is bound to pay. Sinclair the assayer has been over there, and says there's a ledge of the richest quartz he ever set eyes on. It is just a case of getting the machinery to crush it. By the way, what was to-day's take like?'

Abe extracted a small wooden box from his pocket and handed it to his comrade. It contained what appeared to be about a teaspoonful of sand and one or two little metallic granules not larger than a pea. Boss Morgan laughed, and returned it to his companion.

'We sha'n't make our fortune at that rate, Bones,' he remarked; and there was a pause in the conversation as the two men listened to the wind as it screamed and whistled past the little cabin.

'Any news from Buckhurst?' asked Abe, rising and proceeding to extract their supper from the pot.

'Nothing much,' said his companion. 'Cock-eyed Joe has been shot by Billy Reid in McFarlane's Store.'

'Ah,' said Abe, with listless interest.

'Bushrangers have been around and stuck up the Rochdale station.

They say they are coming over here.'

The miner whistled as he poured some whisky into a jug.

'Anything more?' he asked.

'Nothing of importance except that the blacks have been showing a bit down New Sterling way, and that the assayer has bought a piano and is going to have his daughter out from Melbourne to live in the new house opposite on the other side of the road. So you see we are going to have something to look at, my boy,' he added as he sat down, and began attacking the food set before him. 'They say she is a beauty, Bones.'

'She won't be a patch on my Sue,' returned the other decisively.

His partner smiled as he glanced round at the flaring print upon the wall. Suddenly he dropped his knife and seemed to listen. Amid the wild uproar of the wind and the rain there was a low rumbling sound which was evidently not dependent upon the elements.

'What's that?'

'Darned if I know.'

The two men made for the door and peered out earnestly into the darkness. Far away along the Buckhurst road they could see a moving light, and the dull sound was louder than before.

'It's a buggy coming down,' said Abe.

'Where is it going to?'

'Don't know. Across the ford, I s'pose.'

'Why, man, the ford will be six feet deep to-night, and running like a mill-stream.'

The light was nearer now, coming rapidly round the curve of the road. There was a wild sound of galloping with the rattle of the wheels.

'Horses have bolted, by thunder!'

'Bad job for the man inside.'

There was a rough individuality about the inhabitants of Harvey's Sluice, in virtue of which every man bore his misfortunes upon his own shoulders, and had very little sympathy for those of his neighbours. The predominant feeling of the two men was one of pure curiosity as they watched the swinging swaying lanterns coming down the winding road.

'If he don't pull 'em up before they reach the ford he's a goner,' remarked Abe Durton resignedly.

Suddenly there came a lull in the sullen splash of the rain. It was but for a moment, but in that moment there came down on the breeze a long cry which caused the two men to start and stare at each other, and then to rush frantically down the steep incline towards the road below.

'A woman, by Heaven!' gasped Abe, as he sprang across the gaping shaft of a mine in the recklessness of his haste.

Morgan was the lighter and more active man. He drew away rapidly from his stalwart companion. Within a minute he was standing panting and bare-headed in the middle of the soft muddy road, while his partner was still toiling down the side of the declivity.

The carriage was close on him now. He could see in the light of the lamps the raw-boned Australian horse as, terrified by the storm and by its own clatter, it came tearing down the declivity which led to the ford. The man who was driving seemed to see the pale set face in the pathway in front of him, for he yelled out some incoherent words of warning, and made a last desperate attempt to pull up. There was a shout, an oath, and a jarring crash, and Abe, hurrying down, saw a wild infuriated horse rearing madly in the air with a slim

dark figure hanging on to its bridle. Boss, with the keen power of calculation which had made him the finest cricketer at Rugby in his day, had caught the rein immediately below the bit, and clung to it with silent concentration. Once he was down with a heavy thud in the roadway as the horse jerked its head violently forwards, but when, with a snort of exultation, the animal pressed on, it was only to find that the prostrate man beneath its forehoofs still maintained his unyielding grasp.

'Hold it, Bones,' he said, as a tall figure hurled itself into the road and seized the other rein.

'All right, old man, I've got him,' and the horse, cowed by the sight of a fresh assailant, quieted down, and stood shivering with terror. 'Get up, Boss, it's safe now.'

But poor Boss lay groaning in the mud.

'I can't do it, Bones.' There was a catch in the voice as of pain. 'There's something wrong, old chap, but don't make a fuss. It's only a shake; give me a lift up.'

Abe bent tenderly over his prostrate companion. He could see that he was very white, and breathing with difficulty.

'Cheer up, old Boss,' he murmured. 'Hullo! my stars!'

The last two exclamations were shot out of the honest miner's bosom as if they were impelled by some irresistible force, and he took a couple of steps backward in sheer amazement. There at the other side of the fallen man, and half shrouded in the darkness, stood what appeared to Abe's simple soul to be the most beautiful vision that ever had appeared upon earth. To eyes accustomed to rest upon nothing more captivating than the ruddy faces and rough beards of the miners in the

Sluice, it seemed that that fair delicate countenance must belong to a wanderer from some better world. Abe gazed at it with a wondering reverence, oblivious for the moment even of his injured friend upon the ground.

'O papa,' said the apparition, in great distress, 'he is hurt, the gentleman is hurt;' and with a quick feminine gesture of sympathy, she bent her lithe figure over Boss Morgan's prostrate figure.

'Why, it's Abe Durton and his partner,' said the driver of the buggy, coming forward and disclosing the grizzled features of Mr. Joshua Sinclair, the assayer to the mines. 'I don't know how to thank you, boys. The infernal brute got the bit between his teeth, and I should have had to have thrown Carrie out and chanced it in another minute. That's right,' he continued, as Morgan staggered to his feet. 'Not much hurt, I hope.'

'I can get up to the hut now,' said the young man, steadying himself upon his partner's shoulder. 'How are you going to get Miss Sinclair home?'

'O, we can walk,' said that young lady, shaking off the effects of her fright with all the elasticity of youth.

'We can drive and take the road round the bank so as to avoid the ford,' said her father. 'The horse seems cowed enough now; you need not be afraid of it, Carrie. I hope we shall see you at the house, both of you. Neither of us can easily forget this night's work.'

Miss Carrie said nothing, but she managed to shoot a little demure glance of gratitude from under her long lashes, to have won which honest Abe felt that he would have cheerfully undertaken to stop a runaway locomotive.

There was a cheery shout of 'Good-night,' a crack of the whip, and the buggy rattled away in the darkness.

'You told me the men were rough and nasty, pa,' said Miss Carrie Sinclair, after a long silence, when the two dark shadows had died away in the distance, and the carriage was speeding along by the turbulent stream. 'I don't think so. I think they are very nice.' And Carrie was unusually quiet for the remainder of her journey, and seemed more reconciled to the hardship of leaving her dear friend Amelia in the far-off boarding school at Melbourne.

That did not prevent her from writing a full, true, and particular account of their little adventure to the same young lady upon that very night.

'They stopped the horse, darling, and one poor fellow was hurt. And O, Amy, if you had seen the other one in a red shirt, with a pistol at his waist! I couldn't help thinking of you, dear. He was just your idea. You remember, a yellow moustache and great blue eyes. And how he did stare at poor me! You never see such men in Burke-street, Amy;' and so on, for four pages of pretty feminine gossip.

In the mean time poor Boss, badly shaken, had been helped up the hill by his partner and regained the shelter of the shanty. Abe doctored him out of the rude pharmacopœia of the camp, and bandaged up his strained arm. Both were men of few words, and neither made any allusion to what had taken place. It was noticed, however, by Blinky that his master failed to pay his usual nightly orisons before the shrine of Susan Banks. Whether this sagacious fowl drew any deductions from this, and from the fact that Bones sat long and earnestly smoking

by the smouldering fire, I know not. Suffice it that as the candle died away and the miner rose from his chair, his feathered friend flew down upon his shoulder, and was only prevented from giving vent to a sympathetic hoot by Abe's warning finger, and its own strong inherent sense of propriety.

A casual visitor dropping into the straggling township of Harvey's Sluice shortly after Miss Carrie Sinclair's arrival would have noticed a considerable alteration in the manners and customs of its inhabitants. Whether it was the refining influence of a woman's presence, or whether it sprang from an emulation excited by the brilliant appearance of Abe Durton, it is hard to say—probably from a blending of the two. Certain it is that that young man had suddenly developed an affection for cleanliness and a regard for the conventionalities of civilisation, which aroused the astonishment and ridicule of his companions. That Boss Morgan should pay attention to his personal appearance had long been set down as a curious and inexplicable phenomenon, depending upon early education; but that loose-limbed easy-going Bones should flaunt about in a clean shirt was regarded by every grimy denizen of the Sluice as a direct and premeditated insult. In self-defence, therefore, there was a general cleaning up after working hours, and such a run upon the grocery establishment, that soap went up to an unprecedented figure, and a fresh consignment had to be ordered from McFarlane's store in Buckhurst.

'Is this here a free minin' camp, or is it a darned Sunday-school?' had been the indignant query of Long McCoy, a promi-

ment member of the reactionary party, who had failed to advance with the times, having been absent during the period of regeneration. But his remonstrance met with but little sympathy; and at the end of a couple of days a general turbidity of the creek announced his surrender, which was confirmed by his appearance in the Colonial Bar with a shining and bashful face, and hair which was redolent of bear's grease.

'I felt kinder lonesome,' he remarked apologetically, 'so I thought as I'd have a look what was under the clay,' and he viewed himself approvingly in the cracked mirror which graced the select room of the establishment.

Our casual visitor would have noticed a remarkable change also in the conversation of the community. Somehow, when a certain dainty little bonnet with a sweet girlish figure beneath it was seen in the distance among the disused shafts and mounds of red earth which disfigured the sides of the valley, there was a warning murmur, and a general clearing off of the cloud of blasphemy, which was, I regret to state, an habitual characteristic of the working population of Harvey's Sluice. Such things only need a beginning; and it was noticeable that long after Miss Sinclair had vanished from sight there was a decided rise in the moral barometer of the gulches. Men found by experience that their stock of adjectives was less limited than they had been accustomed to suppose, and that the less forcible were sometimes even more adapted for conveying their meaning.

Abe had formerly been considered one of the most experienced valuers of an ore in the settlement. It had been commonly supposed that he was able to estimate the amount of gold in

a fragment of quartz with remarkable exactness. This, however, was evidently a mistake, otherwise he would never have incurred the useless expense of having so many worthless specimens assayed as he now did. Mr. Joshua Sinclair found himself inundated with such a flood of fragments of mica, and lumps of rock containing decimal percentages of the precious metals, that he began to form a very low opinion of the young man's mining capabilities. It is even asserted that Abe shuffled up to the house one morning with a hopeful smile, and, after some fumbling, produced half a brick from the bosom of his jersey, with the stereotyped remark 'that he thought he'd struck it at last, and so had dropped in to ask him to cipher out an estimate.' As this anecdote rests, however, upon the unsupported evidence of Jim Struggles, the humorist of the camp, there may be some slight inaccuracy of detail.

It is certain that what with professional business in the morning and social visits at night, the tall figure of the miner was a familiar object in the little drawing room of Azalea Villa, as the new house of the assayer had been magniloquently named. He seldom ventured upon a remark in the presence of its female occupant; but would sit on the extreme edge of his chair in a state of speechless admiration while she rattled off some lively air upon the newly-imported piano. Many were the strange and unexpected places in which his feet turned up. Miss Carrie had gradually come to the conclusion that they were entirely independent of his body, and had ceased to speculate upon the manner in which she would trip over them on one side of the table while the blushing

owner was apologising from the other. There was only one cloud on honest Bones's mental horizon, and that was the periodical appearance of Black Tom Ferguson, of Rochdale Ferry. This clever young scamp had managed to ingratiate himself with old Joshua, and was a constant visitor at the villa. There were evil rumours abroad about Black Tom. He was known to be a gambler, and shrewdly suspected to be worse. Harvey's Sluice was not censorious, and yet there was a general feeling that Ferguson was a man to be avoided. There was a reckless *élan* about his bearing, however, and a sparkle in his conversation, which had an indescribable charm, and even induced the Boss, who was particular in such matters, to cultivate his acquaintance while forming a correct estimate of his character. Miss Carrie seemed to hail his appearance as a relief, and chattered away for hours about books and music and the gaieties of Melbourne. It was on these occasions that poor simple Bones would sink into the very lowest depths of despondency, and either slink away, or sit glaring at his rival with an earnest malignancy which seemed to cause that gentleman no small amusement.

The miner made no secret to his partner of the admiration which he entertained for Miss Sinclair. If he was silent in her company, he was voluble enough when she was the subject of discourse. Loiterers upon the Buckhurst-road might have heard a stentorian voice upon the hill-side bellowing forth a vocabulary of female charms. He submitted his difficulties to the superior intelligence of the Boss.

'That loafer from Rochdale,' he said, 'he seems to reel it off kinder nat'ral, while for the life

of me I can't say a word. Tell me, Boss, what would *you* say to a girl like that?'

'Why, talk about what would interest her,' said his companion.

'Ah, that's where it lies.'

'Talk about the customs of the place and the country,' said the Boss, pulling meditatively at his pipe. 'Tell her stories of what you have seen in the mines, and that sort of thing.'

'Eh? You'd do that, would you?' responded his comrade more hopefully. 'If that's the hang of it I am right. I'll go up now and tell her about Chicago Bill, an' how he put them two bullets in the man from the bend the night of the dance.'

Boss Morgan laughed.

'That's hardly the thing,' he said. 'You'd frighten her if you told her that. Tell her something lighter, you know; something to amuse her, something funny.'

'Funny?' said the anxious lover, with less confidence in his voice. 'How you and me made Mat Houlahan drunk and put him in the pulpit of the Baptist church, and he wouldn't let the preacher in in the morning. How would that do, eh?'

'For Heaven's sake don't say anything of the sort,' said his Mentor, in great consternation. 'She'd never speak to either of us again. No, what I mean is that you should tell about the habits of the mines, how men live and work and die there. If she is a sensible girl that ought to interest her.'

'How they live at the mines? Pard, you are good to me. How they live? There's a thing I can talk of as glib as Black Tom or any man. I'll try it on her when I see her.'

'By the way,' said his partner listlessly, 'just keep an eye on that man Ferguson. His hands

arn't very clean, you know, and he's not scrupulous when he is aiming for anything. You remember how Dick Williams, of English Town, was found dead in the bush. Of course it was rangers that did it. They do say, however, that Black Tom owed him a deal more money than he could ever have paid. There's been one or two queer things about him. Keep your eye on him, Abe. Watch what he does.'

'I will,' said his companion.

And he did. He watched him that very night. Watched him stride out of the house of the assayer with anger and baffled pride on every feature of his handsome swarthy face. Watched him clear the garden paling at a bound, pass in long rapid strides down the side of the valley, gesticulating wildly with his hands, and vanish into the bushland beyond. All this Abe Durton watched, and with a thoughtful look upon his face he relit his pipe and strolled slowly backward to the hut upon the hill.

March was drawing to a close in Harvey's Sluice, and the glare and heat of the antipodean summer had toned down into the rich mellow hues of autumn. It was never a lovely place to look upon. There was something hopelessly prosaic in the two bare rugged ridges, seamed and scarred by the hand of man, with iron arms of windlasses, and broken buckets projecting everywhere through the endless little hillocks of red earth. Down the middle ran the deeply rutted road from Buckhurst, winding along and crossing the sluggish tide of Harper's Creek by a crumbling wooden bridge. Beyond the bridge lay the cluster of little huts with the Colonial Bar and the Grocery towering in all the dignity of

whitewash among the humble dwellings around. The assayer's verandah-lined house lay above the gulches on the side of the slope nearly opposite the dilapidated specimen of architecture of which our friend Abe was so unreasonably proud.

There was one other building which might have come under the category of what an inhabitant of the Sluice would have described as a 'public edifice' with a comprehensive wave of his pipe which conjured up images of an endless vista of colonnades and minarets. This was the Baptist chapel, a modest little shingle-roofed erection on the bend of the river about a mile above the settlement. It was from this that the town looked at its best, when the harsh outlines and crude colours were somewhat softened by distance. On that particular morning the stream looked pretty as it meandered down the valley; pretty, too, was the long rising upland behind, with its luxuriant green covering; and prettiest of all was Miss Carrie Sinclair, as she laid down the basket of ferns which she was carrying, and stopped upon the summit of the rising ground.

Something seemed to be amiss with that young lady. There was a look of anxiety upon her face which contrasted strangely with her usual appearance of piquant insouciance. Some recent annoyance had left its traces upon her. Perhaps it was to walk it off that she had rambled down the valley; certain it is that she inhaled the fresh breezes of the woodlands as if their resinous fragrance bore with them some antidote for human sorrow.

She stood for some time gazing at the view before her. She could see her father's house, like a white dot upon the hillside, though

strangely enough it was a blue reek of smoke upon the opposite slope which seemed to attract the greater part of her attention. She lingered there, watching it with a wistful look in her hazel eyes. Then the loneliness of her situation seemed to strike her, and she felt one of those spasmodic fits of unreasoning terror to which the bravest women are subject. Tales of natives and of bushrangers, their daring and their cruelty, flashed across her. She glanced at the great mysterious stretch of silent bushland beside her, and stooped to pick up her basket with the intention of hurrying along the road in the direction of the gulches. She started round, and hardly suppressed a scream as a long red-flannelled arm shot out from behind her and withdrew the basket from her very grasp.

The figure which met her eye would to some have seemed little calculated to allay her fears. The high boots, the rough shirt, and the broad girdle with its weapons of death were, however, too familiar to Miss Carrie to be objects of terror; and when above them all she saw a pair of tender blue eyes looking down upon her, and a half-abashed smile lurking under a thick yellow moustache, she knew that for the remainder of that walk ranger and black would be equally powerless to harm her.

'O Mr. Durton,' she said, 'how you did startle me!'

'I'm sorry, miss,' said Abe, in great trepidation at having caused his idol one moment's uneasiness. 'You see,' he continued, with simple cunning, 'the weather bein' fine and my partner gone prospectin', I thought I'd walk up to Hagley's Hill and round back by the bend, and there I sees you accidental-like and promiscuous a-standin' on a hillock.' This astounding falsehood was reeled off

by the miner with great fluency, and an artificial sincerity which at once stamped it as a fabrication. Bones had concocted and rehearsed it while tracking the little footsteps in the clay, and looked upon it as the very depth of human guile. Miss Carrie did not venture upon a remark, but there was a gleam of amusement in her eyes which puzzled her lover.

Abe was in good spirits this morning. It may have been the sunshine, or it may have been the rapid rise of shares in the Conemara, which lightened his heart. I am inclined to think, however, that it was referable to neither of these causes. Simple as he was, the scene which he had witnessed the night before could only lead to one conclusion. He pictured himself walking as wildly down the valley under similar circumstances, and his heart was touched with pity for his rival. He felt very certain that the ill-omened face of Mr. Thomas Ferguson of Rochdale Ferry would never more be seen within the walls of Azalea Villa. Then why did she refuse him? He was handsome, he was fairly rich. Could it—? no, it couldn't; of course it couldn't; how could it! The idea was ridiculous—so very ridiculous that it had fermented in the young man's brain all night, and that he could do nothing but ponder over it in the morning, and cherish it in his perturbed bosom.

They passed down the red pathway together, and along by the river's bank. Abe had relapsed into his normal condition of taciturnity. He had made one gallant effort to hold forth upon the subject of ferns, stimulated by the basket which he held in his hand, but the theme was not a thrilling one, and after a spasmodic

flicker he had abandoned the attempt. While coming along he had been full of racy anecdotes and humorous observations. He had rehearsed innumerable remarks which were to be poured into Miss Sinclair's appreciative ear. But now his brain seemed of a sudden to have become a vacuum, and utterly devoid of any idea save an insane and overpowering impulse to comment upon the heat of the sun. No astronomer who ever reckoned a parallax was so entirely absorbed in the condition of the celestial bodies as honest Bones while he trudged along by the slow-flowing Australian river.

Suddenly his conversation with his partner came back into his mind. What was it Boss had said upon the subject? 'Tell her how they live at the mines.' He revolved it in his brain. It seemed a curious thing to talk about; but Boss had said it, and Boss was always right. He would take the plunge; so with a premonitory hem he blurted out,

'They live mostly on bacon and beans in the valley.'

He could not see what effect this communication had upon his companion. He was too tall to be able to peer under the little straw bonnet. She did not answer. He would try again.

'Mutton on Sundays,' he said.

Even this failed to arouse any enthusiasm. In fact she seemed to be laughing. Boss was evidently wrong. The young man was in despair. The sight of a ruined hut beside the pathway conjured up a fresh idea. He grasped at it as a drowning man to a straw.

'Cockney Jack built that,' he remarked. 'Lived there till he died.'

'What did he die of?' asked his companion.

'Three star brandy,' said Abe

decisively. 'I used to come over of a night when he was bad and sit by him. Poor chap! he had a wife and two children in Putney. He'd rave, and call me Polly, by the hour. He was cleaned out, hadn't a red cent; but the boys collected rough gold enough to see him through. He's buried there in that shaft; that was his claim, so we just dropped him down it an' filled it up. Put down his pick too, an' a spade an' a bucket, so's he'd feel kinder perky and at home.'

Miss Carrie seemed more interested now.

'Do they often die like that?' she asked.

'Well, brandy kills many; but there's more get's dropped—shot, you know.'

'I don't mean that. Do many men die alone and miserable down there, with no one to care for them?' and she pointed to the cluster of houses beneath them. 'Is there any one dying now? It is awful to think of.'

'There's none as I knows on likely to throw up their hand.'

'I wish you wouldn't use so much slang, Mr. Durton,' said Carrie, looking up at him reprovingly out of her violet eyes. It was strange what an air of proprietorship this young lady was gradually assuming towards her gigantic companion. 'You know it isn't polite. You should get a dictionary and learn the proper words.'

'Ah, that's it,' said Bones apologetically. 'It's gettin' your hand on the proper one. When you've not got a steam drill, you've got to put up with a pick.'

'Yes, but it's easy if you really try. You could say that a man was "dying," or "moribund," if you like.'

'That's it,' said the miner enthusiastically. '"Moribund"!

That's a word. Why, you could lay over Boss Morgan in the matter of words. "Moribund!" There's some sound about that.'

Carrie laughed.

'It's not the sound you must think of, but whether it will express your meaning. Seriously, Mr. Durton, if any one should be ill in the camp you must let me know. I can nurse, and I might be of use. You will, won't you?'

Abe readily acquiesced, and relapsed into silence as he pondered over the possibility of inoculating himself with some long and tedious disease. There was a mad dog reported from Buckhurst. Perhaps something might be done with that.

'And now I must say good-morning,' said Carrie, as they came to the spot where a crooked pathway branched off from the track and wound up to Azalea Villa. 'Thank you ever so much for escorting me.'

In vain Abe pleaded for the additional hundred yards, and adduced the overwhelming weight of the diminutive basket as a cogent reason. The young lady was inexorable. She had taken him too far out of his way already. She was ashamed of herself; she wouldn't hear of it.

So poor Bones departed in a mixture of many opposite feelings. He had interested her. She had spoken kindly to him. But then she had sent him away before there was any necessity; she couldn't care much about him if she would do that. I think he might have felt a little more cheerful, however, had he seen Miss Carrie Sinclair as she watched his retiring figure from the garden-gate with a loving look upon her saucy face, and a mischievous smile at his bent head and desponding appearance.

The Colonial Bar was the favourite haunt of the inhabitants of Harvey's Sluice in their hours of relaxation. There had been a fierce competition between it and the rival establishment termed the Grocery, which, in spite of its innocent appellation, aspired also to dispense spirituous refreshments. The importation of chairs into the latter had led to the appearance of a settee in the former. Spittoons appeared in the Grocery against a picture in the Bar, and, as the frequenters expressed it, the honours were even. When, however, the Grocery led a window-curtain, and its opponent returned a snuggery and a mirror, the game was declared to be in favour of the latter, and Harvey's Sluice showed its sense of the spirit of the proprietor by withdrawing their custom from his opponent.

Though every man was at liberty to swagger into the Bar itself, and bask in the shimmer of its many coloured bottles, there was a general feeling that the snuggery, or special apartment, should be reserved for the use of the more prominent citizens. It was in this room that committees met, that opulent companies were conceived and born, and that inquests were generally held. The latter, I regret to state, was, in 1861, a pretty frequent ceremony at the Sluice; and the findings of the coroner were sometimes characterised by a fine breezy originality. Witness when Bully Burke, a notorious desperado, was shot down by a quiet young medical man, and a sympathetic jury brought in that 'the deceased had met his death in an ill-advised attempt to stop a pistol-ball while in motion,' a verdict which was looked upon as a triumph of jurisprudence in the camp, as simultaneously exonerating the culprit,

and adhering to the rigid and undeniable truth.

On this particular evening there was an assemblage of notabilities in the snuggery, though no such pathological ceremony had called them together. Many changes had occurred of late which merited discussion; and it was in this chamber, gorgeous in all the effete luxury of the mirror and settee, that Harvey's Sluice was wont to exchange ideas. The recent cleansing of the population was still causing some ferment in men's minds. Then there was Miss Sinclair and her movements to be commented on, and the paying lead in the Conemara, and the recent rumours of bushrangers. It was no wonder that the leading men in the township had come together in the Colonial Bar.

The rangers were the present subject of discussion. For some few days rumours of their presence had been flying about, and an uneasy feeling had pervaded the colony. Physical fear was a thing little known in Harvey's Sluice. The miners would have turned out to hunt down the desperadoes with as much zest as if they had been so many kangaroos. It was the presence of a large quantity of gold in the town which caused anxiety. It was felt that the fruits of their labour must be secured at any cost. Messages had been sent over to Buckhurst for as many troopers as could be spared, and in the mean time the main street of the Sluice was paraded at night by volunteer sentinels.

A fresh impetus had been given to the panic by the report brought in to-day by Jim Struggles. Jim was of an ambitious and aspiring turn of mind, and after gazing in silent disgust at his last week's clean up, he had metaphorically shaken the clay of Harvey's Sluice

from his feet, and had started off into the woods with the intention of prospecting round until he could hit upon some likely piece of ground for himself. Jim's story was that he was sitting upon a fallen trunk eating his mid-day damper and rusty bacon, when his trained ear had caught the clink of horses' hoofs. He had hardly time to take the precaution of rolling off the tree and crouching down behind it, before a troop of men came riding down through the bush, and passed within a stone-throw of him.

'There was Bill Smeaton and Murphy Duff,' said Struggles, naming two notorious ruffians; 'and there was three more that I couldn't rightly see. And they took the trail to the right, and looked like business all over, with their guns in their hands.'

Jim was submitted to a searching cross-examination that evening; but nothing could shake his testimony or throw a further light upon what he had seen. He told the story several times and at long intervals; and though there might be a pleasing variety in the minor incidents, the main facts were always identically the same. The matter began to look serious.

There were a few, however, who were loudly sceptical as to the existence of the rangers, and the most prominent of these was a young man who was perched on a barrel in the centre of the room, and was evidently one of the leading spirits in the community. We have already seen that dark curling hair, lack-lustre eye, and thin cruel lip, in the person of Black Tom Ferguson, the rejected suitor of Miss Sinclair. He was easily distinguishable from the rest of the party by a tweed coat, and other symptoms of effeminacy in his dress, which might have brought him into disrepute had

he not, like Abe Durton's partner, early established the reputation of being a quietly desperate man. On the present occasion he seemed somewhat under the influence of liquor, a rare occurrence with him, and probably to be ascribed to his recent disappointment. He was almost fierce in his denunciation of Jim Struggles and his story.

'It's always the same,' he said; 'if a man meets a few travellers in the bush, he's bound to come back raving about rangers. If they'd seen Struggles there, they would have gone off with a long yarn about a ranger crouching behind a tree. As to recognising people riding fast among tree trunks—it is an impossibility.'

Struggles, however, stoutly maintained his original assertion, and all the sarcasms and arguments of his opponent were thrown away upon his stolid complacency. It was noticed that Ferguson seemed unaccountably put out about the whole matter. Something seemed to be on his mind, too; for occasionally he would spring off his perch and pace up and down the room with an abstracted and very forbidding look upon his swarthy face. It was a relief to every one when suddenly catching up his hat, and wishing the company a curt 'Good-night,' he walked off through the bar, and into the street beyond.

'Seems kinder put out,' remarked Long McCoy.

'He can't be afeard of the rangers, surely,' said Joe Shamus, another man of consequence, and principal shareholder of the El Dorado.

'No, he's not the man to be afraid,' answered another. 'There's something queer about him the last day or two. He's been long trips in the woods without any tools. They do say that the assay-

er's daughter has chucked him over.'

'Quite right too. A darned sight too good for him,' remarked several voices.

'It's odds but he has another try,' said Shamus. 'He's a hard man to beat when he's set his mind on a thing.'

'Abe Durton's the horse to win,' remarked Houlahan, a little bearded Irishman. 'It's sivin to four I'd be willin' to lay on him.'

'And you'd be afther losing your money, a-vich,' said a young man with a laugh. 'She'll want more brains than ever Bones had in his skull, you bet.'

'Who's seen Bones to-day?' asked McCoy.

'I've seen him,' said the young miner. 'He came round all through the camp asking for a dictionary—wanted to write a letter likely.'

'I saw him readin' it,' said Shamus. 'He came over to me an' told me he'd struck something good at the first show. Showed me a word about as long as your arm—"abdicate," or something.'

'It's a rich man he is now, I suppose,' said the Irishman.

'Well, he's about made his pile. He holds a hundred feet of the Conemara, and the shares go up every hour. If he'd sell out he'd be about fit to go home.'

'Guess he wants to take somebody home with him,' said another. 'Old Joshua wouldn't object, seein' that the money is there.'

I think it has been already recorded in this narrative that Jim Struggles, the wandering prospector, had gained the reputation of being the wit of the camp. It was not only in airy badinage, but in the conception and execution of more pretentious practical pleasantries that Jim had earned his reputation. His adventure in the

morning had caused a certain stagnation in his usual flow of humour; but the company and his potatoes were gradually restoring him to a more cheerful state of mind. He had been brooding in silence over some idea since the departure of Ferguson, and he now proceeded to evolve it to his expectant companions.

'Say, boys,' he began. 'What day's this?'

'Friday, ain't it?'

'No, not that. What day of the month?'

'Darned if I know!'

'Well, I'll tell you now. It's the first o' April. I've got a calendar in the hut as says so.'

'What if it is?' said several voices.

'Well, don't you see, it's All Fools' day. Couldn't we fix up some little joke on some one, eh? Couldn't we get a laugh out of it? Now there's old Bones, for instance; he'll never smell a rat. Couldn't we send him off somewhere and watch him go maybe? We'd have something to chaff him on for a month to come, eh?'

There was a general murmur of assent. A joke, however poor, was always welcome to the Sluice. The broader the point, the more thoroughly was it appreciated. There was no morbid delicacy of feeling in the gulches.

'Where shall we send him?' was the query.

Jim Struggles was buried in thought for a moment. Then an unhallowed inspiration seemed to come over him, and he laughed uproariously, rubbing his hands between his knees in the excess of his delight.

'Well, what is it?' asked the eager audience.

'See here, boys. There's Miss Sinclair. You was saying as Abe's gone on her. She don't fancy him much you think. Sup-

pose we write him a note—send it him to-night, you know.'

'Well, what then?' said McCoy.

'Well, pretend the note is from her, d'ye see? Put her name at the bottom. Let on as she wants him to come up an' meet her in the garden at twelve. He's bound to go. He'll think she wants to go off with him. It'll be the biggest thing played this year.'

There was a roar of laughter. The idea conjured up of honest Bones mooning about in the garden, and of old Joshua coming out to remonstrate with a double-barrelled shot-gun, was irresistibly comic. The plan was approved of unanimously.

'Here's pencil and here's paper,' said the humorist. 'Who's goin' to write the letter?'

'Write it yourself, Jim,' said Shamus.

'Well, what shall I say?'

'Say what you think right.'

'I don't know how she'd put it,' said Jim, scratching his head in great perplexity. 'However, Bones will never know the differ. How will this do? "Dear old man. Come to the garden at twelve to-night, else I'll never speak to you again," eh?'

'No, that's not the style,' said the young miner. 'Mind, she's a lass of eddication. She'd put it kinder flowery and soft.'

'Well, write it yourself,' said Jim sulkily, handing him over the pencil.

'This is the sort of thing,' said the miner, moistening the point of it in his mouth. '"When the moon is in the sky—"'

'There it is. That's bully,' from the company.

'"And the stars a-shinin' bright, meet, O meet me, Adolphus, by the garden-gate at twelve."'

'His name ain't Adolphus,' objected a critic.

'That's how the poetry comes in,' said the miner. 'It's kinder fanciful, d'y'e see. Sounds a darned sight better than Abe. Trust him for guessing who she means. I'll sign it Carrie. There!'

This epistle was gravely passed round the room from hand to hand, and reverentially gazed upon as being a remarkable production of the human brain. It was then folded up and committed to the care of a small boy, who was solemnly charged under dire threats to deliver it at the shanty, and to make off before any awkward questions were asked him. It was only after he had disappeared in the darkness that some slight compunction visited one or two of the company.

'Ain't it playing it rather low on the girl?' said Shamus.

'And rough on old Bones?' suggested another.

However, these objections were overruled by the majority, and disappeared entirely upon the appearance of a second jorum of whisky. The matter had almost been forgotten by the time that Abe had received his note, and was spelling it out with a palpitating heart under the light of his solitary candle.

That night has long been remembered in Harvey's Sluice. A fitful breeze was sweeping down from the distant mountains, moaning and sighing among the deserted claims. Dark clouds were hurrying across the moon, one moment throwing a shadow over the landscape, and the next allowing the silvery radiance to shine down, cold and clear, upon the little valley, and bathe in a weird mysterious light the great stretch of bushland on either side of it. A great loneliness seemed to rest on

the face of Nature. Men remarked afterwards on the strange eerie atmosphere which hung over the little town.

It was in the darkness that Abe Durton sallied out from his little shanty. His partner, Boss Morgan, was still absent in the bush, so that beyond the ever-watchful Blinky there was no living being to observe his movements. A feeling of mild surprise filled his simple soul that his angel's delicate fingers could have formed those great straggling hieroglyphics; however, there was the name at the foot, and that was enough for him. She wanted him, no matter for what, and with a heart as pure and as heroic as any knight-errant, this rough miner went forth at the summons of his love.

He groped his way up the steep winding track which led to Azalea Villa. There was a little clump of small trees and shrubs about fifty yards from the entrance of the garden. Abe stopped for a moment when he had reached them in order to collect himself. It was hardly twelve yet, so that he had a few minutes to spare. He stood under their dark canopy peering at the white house vaguely outlined in front of him. A plain enough little dwelling-place to any prosaic mortal, but girt with reverence and awe in the eyes of the lover.

The miner paused under the shade of the trees, and then moved on to the garden-gate. There was no one there. He was evidently rather early. The moon was shining brightly now, and the country round was as clear as day. Abe looked past the little villa at the road which ran like a white winding streak over the brow of the hill. A watcher behind could have seen his square athletic figure standing out sharp and

clear. Then he gave a start as if he had been shot, and staggered up against the little gate beside him.

He had seen something which caused even his sunburned face to become a shade paler as he thought of the girl so near him. Just at the bend of the road, not two hundred yards away, he saw a dark moving mass coming round the curve, and lost in the shadow of the hill. It was but for a moment; yet in that moment the quick perception of the practised woodman had realised the whole situation. It was a band of horsemen bound for the villa; and what horsemen would ride so by night save the terror of the woodlands—the dreaded rangers of the bush?

It is true that on ordinary occasions Abe was as sluggish in his intellect as he was heavy in his movements. In the hour of danger, however, he was as remarkable for cool deliberation as for prompt and decisive action. As he advanced up the garden he rapidly reckoned up the chances against him. There were half a dozen of the assailants at the most moderate computation, all desperate and fearless men. The question was whether he could keep them at bay for a short time and prevent their forcing a passage into the house. We have already mentioned that sentinels had been placed in the main street of the town. Abe reckoned that help would be at hand within ten minutes of the firing of the first shot.

Were he inside the house he could confidently reckon on holding his own for a longer period than that. Before he could rouse the sleepers and gain admission, however, the rangers would be upon him. He must content himself with doing his utmost. At

any rate he would show Carrie that if he could not talk to her he could at least die for her. The thought gave him quite a glow of pleasure, as he crept under the shadow of the house. He cocked his revolver. Experience had taught him the advantage of the first shot.

The road along which the rangers were coming ended at a wooden gate opening into the upper part of the assayer's little garden. This gate had a high acacia hedge on either side of it, and opened into a short walk also lined by impassable thorny walls. Abe knew the place well. One resolute man might, he thought, hold the passage for a few minutes until the assailants broke through elsewhere and took him in the rear. At any rate, it was his best chance. He passed the front door, but forbore to give any alarm. Sinclair was an elderly man, and would be of little assistance in such a desperate struggle as was before him, and the appearance of lights in the house would warn the rangers of the resistance awaiting them. O for his partner the Boss, for Chicago Bill, for any one of twenty gallant men who would have come at his call and stood by him in such a quarrel! He turned into the narrow pathway. There was the well-remembered wooden gate; and there, perched upon the gate, languidly swinging his legs backwards and forwards, and peering down the road in front of him, was Mr. John Morgan, the very man for whom Abe had been longing from the bottom of his heart.

There was short time for explanations. A few hurried words announced that the Boss, returning from his little tour, had come across the rangers riding on their mission of darkness, and overhearing their destination, had

managed by hard running and knowledge of the country to arrive before them. 'No time to alarm any one,' he explained, still panting from his exertions; 'must stop them ourselves—not come for swag—come for your girl. Only over our bodies, Bones;' and with these few broken words the strangely assorted friends shook hands and looked lovingly into each other's eyes, while the tramp of the horses came down to them on the fragrant breeze of the woods.

There were six rangers in all. One who appeared to be leader rode in front, while the others followed in a body. They flung themselves off their horses when they were opposite the house, and after a few muttered words from their captain, tethered the animals to a small tree, and walked confidently towards the gate.

Boss Morgan and Abe were crouching down under the shadow of the hedge, at the extreme end of the narrow passage. They were invisible to the rangers, who evidently reckoned on meeting little resistance in this isolated house. As the first man came forwards and half turned to give some order to his comrades both the friends recognised the stern profile and heavy moustache of Black Ferguson, the rejected suitor of Miss Carrie Sinclair. Honest Abe made a mental vow that he at least should never reach the door alive.

The ruffian stepped up to the gate and put his hand upon the latch. He started as a stentorian 'Stand back!' came thundering out from among the bushes. In war, as in love, the miner was a man of few words.

'There's no road this way,' explained another voice with an infinite sadness and gentleness about it which was characteristic

of its owner when the devil was rampant in his soul. The ranger recognised it. He remembered the soft languid address which he had listened to in the billiard-room of the Buckhurst Arms, and which had wound up by the mild orator putting his back against the door, drawing a derringer, and asking to see the sharper who would dare to force a passage. 'It's that infernal fool Durton,' he said, 'and his white-faced friend.'

Both were well-known names in the country round. But the rangers were reckless and desperate men. They drew up to the gate in a body.

'Clear out of that!' said their leader in a grim whisper; 'you can't save the girl. Go off with whole skins while you have the chance.'

The partners laughed.

'Then curse you, come on!'

The gate was flung open and the party fired a struggling volley, and made a fierce rush towards the gravelled walk.

The revolvers cracked merrily in the silence of the night from the bushes at the other end. It was hard to aim with precision in the darkness. The second man sprang convulsively into the air, and fell upon his face with his arms extended, writhing horribly in the moonlight. The third was grazed in the leg and stopped. The others stopped out of sympathy. After all, the girl was not for them, and their heart was hardly in the work. Their captain rushed madly on, like a valiant blackguard as he was, but was met by a crashing blow from the butt of Abe Durton's pistol, delivered with a fierce energy which sent him reeling back among his comrades with the blood streaming from his shattered jaw, and his capacity

for cursing cut short at the very moment when he needed to draw upon it most.

'Don't go yet,' said the voice in the darkness.

However, they had no intention of going yet. A few minutes must elapse, they knew, before Harvey's Sluice could be upon them. There was still time to force the door if they could succeed in mastering the defenders. What Abe had feared came to pass. Black Ferguson knew the ground as well as he did. He ran rapidly along the hedge, and the five crashed through it where there was some appearance of a gap. The two friends glanced at each other. Their flank was turned. They stood up like men who knew their fate and did not fear to meet it.

There was a wild medley of dark figures in the moonlight, and a ringing cheer from well-known voices. The humorists of Harvey's Sluice had found something even more practical than the joke which they had come to witness. The partners saw the faces of friends beside them—Shamus, Struggles, McCoy. There was a desperate rally, a sweeping fiery rush, a cloud of smoke, with pistol-shots and fierce oaths ringing out of it, and when it lifted, a single dark shadow flying for dear life to the shelter of the broken hedge was the only ranger upon his feet within the little garden. But there was no sound of triumph among the victors; a strange hush had come over them, and a murmur as of grief—for there, lying across the threshold which he had fought so gallantly to defend, lay poor Abe, the loyal and simple hearted, breathing heavily with a bullet through his lungs.

He was carried inside with all the rough tenderness of the mines.

There were men there, I think, who would have borne his hurt to have had the love of that white girlish figure, which bent over the blood-stained bed and whispered so softly and so tenderly in his ear. Her voice seemed to rouse him. He opened his dreamy blue eyes and looked about him. They rested on her face.

'Played out,' he murmured; 'pardon, Carrie, morib—' and with a faint smile he sank back upon the pillow.

However, Abe failed for once to be as good as his word. His hardy constitution asserted itself, and he shook off what might in a weaker man have proved a deadly wound. Whether it was the balmy air of the woodlands which came sweeping over a thousand miles of forest into the sick man's room, or whether it was the little nurse who tended him so gently, certain it is that within two months we heard that he had realised his shares in the Conemara, and gone from Harvey's Sluice and the little shanty upon the hill for ever.

I had the advantage a short time afterwards of seeing an extract from the letter of a young lady named Amelia, to whom we have made a casual allusion in the course of our narrative. We have already broken the privacy of one feminine epistle, so we shall have fewer scruples in glancing at another. 'I was bridesmaid,' she remarks, 'and Carrie looked charming' (underlined) 'in the veil and orange blossoms. Such a man, he is, twice as big as your Jack, and he was so funny, and blushed, and dropped the prayer-book. And when they asked the question you could have heard him roar "I do!" at the other end of George-street. His best man was a darling' (twice underlined). 'So quiet and hand-

some and nice. Too gentle to take care of himself among those rough men, I am sure.' I think it quite possible that in the fullness of time Miss Amelia managed to take upon herself the care of our old friend Mr. Jack Morgan, commonly known as the Boss.

A tree is still pointed out at the bend as Ferguson's gum-tree. There is no need to enter into unsavoury details. Justice is short and sharp in primitive colonies, and the dwellers in Harvey's Sluice were a serious and practical race.

It is still the custom for a select party to meet on a Saturday evening in the snugger of the Colonial Bar. On such occasions,

if there be a stranger or guest to be entertained, the same solemn ceremony is always observed. Glasses are charged in silence; there is a tapping of the same upon the table, and then, with a deprecating cough, Jim Struggles comes forward and tells the tale of the April joke, and of what came of it. There is generally conceded to be something very artistic in the way in which he breaks off suddenly at the close of his narrative by waving his bumper in the air with 'An' here's to Mr. and Mrs. Bones. God bless 'em!' a sentiment in which the stranger, if he be a prudent man, will most cordially acquiesce.

A. CONAN DOYLE, M.B.

THE JASMINE WREATH

('COJO JASMIN Y CLAVEL').

Freely translated from the Spanish of Don Manuel del Rio.

JASMINE with gilly-flow'rs I wreathe,
My lips his name oft fondly breathe.

O crimson gilly-flow'rets sweet,
O'er which the wanton zephyrs blow,
Bright tokens my true love to greet,
Tell him e'en thus my heart doth glow!
O jasmine, pure as virgin snow,
Thy sweetest perfumes o'er him breathe,
Say, like thy petals I am pale,
And, yearning, ever weep and wail—
Jasmine with gilly-flow'rs I wreathe.

A thousand blossoms, gemmed with dew,
Now 'neath the vernal sun are born,
All rich in perfume, gay of hue—
Alas! their beauty will be gone
Ere doth arise another morn!
Tell me, my fragrant jasmine-wreath,
Tell me, O gilly-flow'rets red,
Is Love's bloom, too, so quickly shed?
My lips his name oft fondly breathe!

BARONESS SWIFT.

ON THE QUAI VOLTAIRE.

A Leaf from a Book Collector's Note-Book.

THERE was a time, some eighteen or twenty years ago, when early rising was not only considered a duty, but practised as a regular habit, by Parisian book-collectors. In those days they had an object in being beforehand with their colleagues; for was not the hour between seven and eight A.M. the only possible opportunity of inspecting the contents of the wooden boxes exposed on the parapet of the quay, and extracting therefrom some precious Elzevir or other typographical rarity before the main body of loungers had started on their morning ramble? A motley assemblage they were, those ardent searchers after literary blue dahlias, old and young, rich and poor, from such aristocratic book-worms as Messieurs de Labedoyère, Soleinne, and Saint-Mauris down to Francisque, the actor of the Gaité, and that indefatigable and never-failing *habitué*, the print-seller Sieurin, keenest and most astute of bibliomaniacs! The student on his way to the Sorbonne; the German professor, attired in strangely-cut garments, with pockets as capacious as those of Colline in Murger's *Vie de Bohème*; the bargain-hunters of high and low degree, hurrying from all quarters of the city to the general place of rendezvous, paced up and down with eager glance along the broad strip of pavement extending from the Pont Royal to the Rue des Saints Pères, then known, as now, by the name of Quai Voltaire.

One of these miscellaneous visi-

tors, an elderly Englishman, was invariably among the first to arrive and usually the very last to depart. Formerly a medical man in good practice, he had long since abandoned the healing profession for that of book-collector, and devoted to his favourite pursuit not only his time, but every penny he could scrape together. Dr. S. had at one period made his mark in literature, and, besides contributing to divers scientific journals, had compiled for a collection of Sheridan's plays a comprehensive biography of the dramatist; but latterly his pen had remained idle, and he had become a sort of *brocanteur*, picking up scarce editions for a few sous, and disposing of them afterwards at a considerable profit to less experienced amateurs both in Paris and in London. Once, he told me, by an unheard stroke of good fortune, he had discovered amid a heap of odd volumes no less a treasure than an original copy of Corneille's *Illustre Théâtre*, and had resold it on the same day for a thousand francs; but, as he remarked with a disconsolate shake of the head, 'such windfalls never happen to a man twice.' My acquaintance with him was of the slightest, and I eventually lost sight of him altogether; but I afterwards heard that, having frittered away in speculations the slender means he possessed, he had been reduced to subsist on the charity of those who had known him in better days, and had ultimately disappeared, no one could tell whither.

Little by little the side of the Quai Voltaire bordering the river has lost its importance in the eyes of book-collectors, the localities now generally selected for their researches being the Quai Malaquais and the immediate neighbourhood of the Pont des Arts; they are, however, scarcely so early birds as of yore, nor, to say the truth, have the contents of the boxes been of late years sufficiently tempting to warrant the matutinal exertion in which their predecessors used to delight. Most of the ancient dealers, too, have migrated elsewhere, almost the sole remaining relic of the past still occupying his accustomed post, exactly where the *citadine* drivers, with their glazed hats and scarlet waistcoats, calmly smoke their pipes while waiting for a fare, being a tall meagre individual, whom, at whatever hour you may chance to pass, you will invariably find with a cigar in his mouth. But even he has a dejected appearance, and his stock-in-trade mainly consists of a few well-thumbed novels or plays with repasted covers, or perhaps, by way of variety, a stray copy of that palpitating production *L'Almanach de Liège*.

But we have not yet done with the Quai Voltaire. Crossing the road, and treading gingerly on the rough and uneven stones which form the foot pavement, we have before us a long vista of book and print sellers, interspersed with two largely patronised wine-shops, a glove manufacturer, three or four dealers in curiosities, a *bureau de tabac*, and an hotel, taking its name from the presiding genius of the quarter, the philosopher of Ferney. Of these various items only one, a Triton among minnows, particularly claims our attention. It is to all appearance a modest and unpretending estab-

lishment, differing neither externally nor internally from the ordinary run of second-hand literary dépôts, and so uncomfortably encumbered with volumes piled up in every direction from floor to ceiling, that the first thought of a stranger on entering the low-roofed ill-lighted shop is to get out of it again as quickly as possible. Few, indeed, save those initiated in such matters, would be likely to imagine the existence, in so unpromising a locality, of as valuable a stock-in-trade as any in the capital, or to credit its owner with being one of the best and acutest book connoisseurs in republican France. He is a Norman, of course—for, with scarcely an exception, what Parisian book or print seller is not?—and 'hails,' no doubt, like the great majority of his colleagues, from the neighbourhood of Coutances, a district which seems to enjoy the monopoly of supplying the French metropolis with a constant succession of youthful recruits, each of whom on his arrival readily finds a home with some uncle or cousin already established in business, and in due course of time sets up for himself. Such has been the case with our friend of the Quai Voltaire, who, by the way, is of noble descent, and although a professed admirer of the principles of '89, is, we suspect, rather proud than otherwise of the patrician 'de' prefixed to his name. By dint of unwearied industry and no slight amount of natural capacity he has from small beginnings gradually reached the top of the tree, and become an acknowledged authority on all subjects connected with his craft.

While we are examining his latest acquisitions, a tall, good-looking, but somewhat slovenly attired individual enters the shop, in whom we recognise at a glance

the realistic author of *La Fille Elisa*, M. Edmond de Goncourt; he is in quest of documents relating to the celebrated singer Madame de St. Huberty, whose biography, forming a pendant to that of her contemporary Sophie Arnould, he is on the point of publishing. Presently in walks a remarkably short and stout personage, with keen twinkling eyes and an unctuous smile; this is no other than the genial critic of the *Monde Illustré*, one of the liveliest of modern humorists, and the most profound *gourmet* in Paris or out of it—in a word, Charles Monselet. He spots at once an *Almanach des Spectacles* for 1752, which is lying on the counter, and both he and M. de Goncourt being

dramatic enthusiasts, the conversation naturally turns on their favourite topic. For upwards of an hour a running fire of anecdote and reminiscence delights not only those already present, but more than one new arrival; until Monselet, who never forgets what to him is the important business of the day, looks at his watch, opines that it is near dinner-time, and waddles over the Pont Royal towards his beloved boulevard; while his colleague, for whom gastronomy has little charm, shapes his course along the quay, possibly to meditate on some novel conception calculated to throw into the shade even the arch-priest of realism, Emile Zola.

C. H.

THE STORY OF A MINIATURE.

You see that portrait yonder—the miniature that lies
In a case of red morocco, among the things I prize;
'Tis worthy of attention. You should examine it;
For the face is young and handsome, and the painting's exquisite.

The lips seem almost speaking, the eyes look quite alive;
His age? I should not put it at more than twenty-five.
The blue coat and brass buttons so quaint, you say? Well, yes;
But *then* it was the fashion to wear that kind of dress.

The frame is blue enamel, with gold rim—very plain—
And just a ring—gold also—through which to pass a chain;
That face was clearly painted for somebody to wear;
For if you'll look behind it, you'll find a lock of hair.

It bears a name and numbers, that mark a certain date;
But they could tell me nothing about his life and fate.
For years I knew this only—he lived till seventy-two;
I knew he never married, and that was *all* I knew.

I wondered what the story, and whose the lock of hair;
And whose the hand that cut it, and who had placed it there;
Till once when I was searching for something else, I found
A bundle of old papers with a silken thread around.

The ink was very faded, the leaves were brown with age,
And a scent, half sweet, half musty, pervaded every page.
They told a piteous story, and through it all *one* name,
As that behind the picture I recognised the same.

I took away the papers, and read them in the dusk;
I liked their sickly odour of mustiness and musk,
And I puzzled out the writing for an hour and a half,
And pondered o'er the story that read like an epitaph!

You may call it what you will, dear—a fancy or a dream;
It matters very little if things *are* or only *seem*;
But, as I sat that evening, I felt no more alone
Than at this very moment, with your hand within mine own.

The house must then be haunted? Ah, well! and if it be?
Perhaps most houses are so, for those with eyes to see.
I am not superstitious—and yet I can declare
I've seen ghosts in this chamber, heard steps upon this stair.

So—you would like to hear it, this tale ? I thought you would.
To hear of high devotion must surely do one good !
Such deeds *have* been and *will* be, so long as Love shall last,
To link the dead and living, the Present and the Past.

'Twas on a summer's evening, while the daylight lingering shone,
Within this very chamber a maiden sat alone,
Beside the open window where the honeysuckles climb
Along the stone balcony in the early summer-time.

Her dress was plain white muslin with cherry ribbons gay—
Short sleeves and long black mittens, in the fashion of the day ;
And clasped between her fingers two rosebuds, red and white,
Whose petals, like her eyelids, were wet with tear-drops bright.

A step—a knock that waits not for any answering word,
And she turned and looked up quickly and trembled like a bird,
To greet the man who entered—blue coat and powdered hair,
Just as he's represented in the portrait lying there.

Three strides across the chamber that brought him to her side,
And he stooped and clasped her fondly, with all a lover's pride ;
' And did you weep, my darling, to think I should delay ?
But let me kiss those tear-drops— What ! would you say me nay ?

With passionate sobs she answered, ' O love, it may not be !
They've fathomed it, the secret, that dwells 'twixt you and me ;
And he, my eldest brother, has sworn a fearful oath
To have your very life-blood, ere we shall plight our troth !

His laugh rang loud and scornful : ' The words, I grant, are grim,
But let him curse and threaten, what do I care for him ?
So be *your* glance is kindly, so be *your* heart is true,
What need for me to ask *him* if I may come and woo ?

He paused, then went on boldly, yet in a softened tone,
As he took her little fingers and held them in his own :
' You owe them naught, these brothers, these men who brag and swear ;
Trust all to me, and leave them : have you courage ? will you dare ?

No ? lest *my* life be perilled ! My sweet ! yet if *you* stay,
The house that holds my treasure I shall visit, come what may ;
So anyhow you see, dear, the chances are I die,
But the chance is one to twenty if we risk it now and fly.

I saw your brothers riding together o'er the hill
('Twas only at a distance), and the house is very still ;
For the servants all are idling down on the bowling-green :
No moment could be better if we would not be seen.'

Her eyes returned him answer, though not a word she spoke,
But silently allowed him to wrap her in her cloak ;
And silently she followed : yea, had he said she must,
She'd have followed him for ever, so boundless was her trust.

A sound of angry voices, a hurried heavy tread,
That woke the sleeping echoes of the vaulted roof o'erhead ;
And across the centre doorway there stood her brothers both,
With fury on their foreheads, and on their lips an oath.

It may be some suspicion had set them on the track,
Or some unlooked-for errand had brought them hurrying back ;
I know not if it were so ; but this is all I know,
They met their sister's lover as men who meet their foe.

They did not give a challenge, they did not pause to prate,
Their passion was too deadly, and too intense their hate ;
They recked not he was 'fenceless ; why should they shrink or care ?
They had no thought of mercy, they did not mean to spare.

He knew they sought his life-blood, he knew that he must die ;
But he would not stoop in anger to question or deny.
A sharp report—an echo—a curling wreath of smoke,
While a single shriek of anguish across the stillness broke !

But when it cleared, that smoke-wreath, with horror they stood still
To see the ghastly ending of their foul resolve to kill ;
For she, their sweet young sister, shot through the heart lay *dead*,
While he stood o'er her scathless whose blood they'd sworn to shed.

And then his face of anguish was a fearful sight to see !
'O God ! where was the justice to let her die for me !
And did you think, my darling, by dying thus to save ?
Or did you hope at least, love, to share with me my grave ?

Stand back ! Stand back, I warn ye ! Ye twain have played your part ;
I have the right, I only, to hold her to my heart !'
Then on the pale fair forehead he pressed one lingering kiss,
For her death and deep devotion had made her wholly his.

Around her neck he found it, by a silken ribbon tied—
The little painted portrait of him for whom she died ;
His was the hand removed it, as *his* had placed it there,
And *his* the hand that severed that single lock of hair.

So that's the piteous story yon picture speaks to us :
Of these two hapless lovers, one died a victim thus ;
The other, as I told you, lived on till seventy-two ;
But I know he never married—his love was *far* too true.

And the little painted portrait among my treasures dwells,
Not for its painting merely, but for the tale it tells ;
For half the things we keep, dear, we only prize at last
As links to bind the ages, the Present and the Past.

HARRIET L. CHILDE-PEMBERTON.





BOUND FOR 'THE OAKS'

A SKETCH BY 'THE DRESS' WARD.

See the V.



LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY 1882.

OUR DERBY SWEEPSTAKES.

'Bob!' I shouted.

No answer.

'Bob!'

A rapid crescendo of snores ending in a prolonged gasp.

'Wake up, Bob!'

'What the deuce is the row?' said a very sleepy voice.

'It's nearly breakfast-time,' I explained.

'Bother breakfast-time!' said the rebellious spirit in the bed.

'And here's a letter, Bob,' said I.

'Why on earth couldn't you say so at once? Come on with it,' on which cordial invitation I marched into my brother's room, and perched myself upon the side of his bed.

'Here you are,' said I: 'Indian stamp—Brindisi postmark. Who is it from?'

'Mind your own business, Stumpy,' said my brother, as he pushed back his curly tangled locks, and, after rubbing his eyes, proceeded to break the seal. Now if there is one appellation for which above all others I have a profound contempt, it is this one of 'Stumpy.' Some miserable nurse, impressed by the relative proportions of my round grave face and little mottled legs, had dubbed me with the odious nickname in the days of my childhood. I am not really a bit more stumpy than any other girl of

seventeen. On the present occasion I rose in all the dignity of wrath, and was about to dump my brother on the head with the pillow by way of remonstrance, when a look of interest in his face stopped me.

'Who do you think is coming, Nelly?' he said. 'An old friend of yours.'

'What! from India? Not Jack Hawthorne?'

'Even so,' said Bob. 'Jack is coming back and going to stay with us. He says he will be here almost as soon as his letter. Now don't dance about like that. You'll knock down the guns, or do some damage. Keep quiet like a good girl, and sit down here again.' Bob spoke with all the weight of the two-and-twenty summers which had passed over his towsey head, so I calmed down and settled into my former position.

'Won't it be jolly?' I cried. 'But, Bob, the last time he was here he was a boy, and now he is a man. He won't be the same Jack at all.'

'Well, for that matter,' said Bob, 'you were only a girl then—a nasty little girl with ringlets, while now—'

'What now?' I asked.

Bob seemed actually on the eve of paying me a compliment.

'Well, you haven't got the ringlets, and you are ever so

much bigger, you see, and nastier.'

Brothers are a blessing for one thing. There is no possibility of any young lady getting unreasonably conceited if she be endowed with them.

I think they were all glad at breakfast-time to hear of Jack Hawthorne's promised advent. By 'all' I mean my mother and Elsie and Bob. Our cousin Solomon Barker looked anything but overjoyed when I made the announcement in breathless triumph. I never thought of it before, but perhaps that young man is getting fond of Elsie, and is afraid of a rival; otherwise I don't see why such a simple thing should have caused him to push away his egg, and declare that he had done famously, in an aggressive manner which at once threw doubt upon his proposition. Grace Maberly, Elsie's friend, seemed quietly contented, as is her wont.

As for me, I was in a riotous state of delight. Jack and I had been children together. He was like an elder brother to me until he became a cadet and left us. How often Bob and he had climbed old Brown's apple-trees, while I stood beneath and collected the spoil in my little white pinafore! There was hardly a scrape or adventure which I could remember in which Jack did not figure as a prominent character. But he was 'Lieutenant' Hawthorne now, had been through the Afghan War, and was, as Bob said, 'quite the warrior.' What ever would he look like? Somehow the 'warrior' had conjured up an idea of Jack in full armour with plumes on his head, thirsting for blood, and hewing at somebody with an enormous sword. After doing that sort of thing I was afraid he would never descend to romps

and charades and the other stock amusements of Hatherley House.

Cousin Sol was certainly out of spirits during the next few days. He could be hardly persuaded to make a fourth at lawn-tennis, but showed an extraordinary love of solitude and strong tobacco. We used to come across him in the most unexpected places, in the shrubbery and down by the river, on which occasions, if there was any possibility of avoiding us, he would gaze rigidly into the distance, and utterly ignore feminine shouts and the waving of parasols. It was certainly very rude of him. I got hold of him one evening before dinner, and drawing myself up to my full height of five feet four and a half inches, I proceeded to give him a piece of my mind, a process which Bob characterises as the height of charity, since it consists in my giving away what I am most in need of myself.

Cousin Sol was lounging in a rocking-chair with the *Times* before him, gazing moodily over the top of it into the fire. I ranged up alongside and poured in my broadside.

'We seem to have given you some offence, Mr. Barker,' I remarked, with lofty courtesy.

'What do you mean, Nell?' asked my cousin, looking up at me in surprise. He had a very curious way of looking at me, had cousin Sol.

'You appear to have dropped our acquaintance,' I remarked; and then suddenly descending from my heroics, 'You *are* stupid, Sol! What's been the matter with you?'

'Nothing, Nell. At least, nothing of any consequence. You know my medical examination is in two months, and I am reading for it.'

'O,' said I, in a bristle of indignation, 'if that's it, there's no

more to be said. Of course if you prefer bones to your female relations, it's all right. There are young men who would rather make themselves agreeable than mope in corners and learn how to prod people with knives.' With which epitome of the noble science of surgery I proceeded to straighten some refractory antimacassars with unnecessary violence.

I could see Sol looking with an amused smile at the angry little blue-eyed figure in front of him. 'Don't blow me up, Nell,' he said; 'I have been plucked once, you know. Besides,' looking grave, 'you'll have amusement enough when this—what is his name?—Lieutenant Hawthorne comes.'

'Jack won't go and associate with mummies and skeletons, at any rate,' I remarked.

'Do you always call him Jack?' asked the student.

'Of course I do. John sounds so stiff.'

'O, it does, does it?' said my companion doubtfully.

I still had my theory about Elsie running in my head. I thought I might try and set the matter in a more cheerful light. Sol had got up, and was staring out of the open window. I went over to him and glanced up timidly into his usually good-humoured face, which was now looking very dark and discontented. He was a shy man as a rule, but I thought that with a little leading he might be brought to confess.

'You're a jealous old thing,' I remarked.

The young man coloured and looked down at me.

'I know your secret,' said I boldly.

'What secret?' said he, colouring even more.

'Never you mind. I know it. Let me tell you this,' I added,

getting bolder: 'that Jack and Elsie never got on very well. There is far more chance of Jack's falling in love with me. We were always friends.'

If I had stuck the knitting-needle which I held in my hand into cousin Sol he could not have given a greater jump. 'Good heavens!' he said, and I could see his dark eyes staring at me through the twilight. 'Do you really think that it is your sister that I care for?'

'Certainly,' said I stoutly, with a feeling that I was nailing my colours to the mast.

Never did a single word produce such an effect. Cousin Sol wheeled round with a gasp of astonishment, and sprang right out of the window. He always had curious ways of expressing his feelings, but this one struck me as being so entirely original that I was utterly bereft of any idea save that of wonder. I stood staring out into the gathering darkness. Then there appeared looking in at me from the lawn a very much abashed and still rather astonished face. 'It's you I care for, Nell,' said the face, and at once vanished, while I heard the noise of somebody running at the top of his speed down the avenue. He certainly was a most extraordinary young man.

Things went on very much the same at Hatherley House in spite of cousin Sol's characteristic declaration of affection. He never sounded me as to my sentiments in regard to him, nor did he allude to the matter for several days. He evidently thought that he had done all which was needed in such cases. He used to decompose me dreadfully at times, however, by coming and planting himself opposite me, and staring at me with a stony rigidity which was absolutely appalling.

'Don't do that, Sol,' I said to him one day; 'you give me the creeps all over.'

'Why do I give you the creeps, Nelly?' said he. 'Don't you like me?'

'O yes, I like you well enough,' said I. 'I like Lord Nelson, for that matter; but I shouldn't like his monument to come and stare at me by the hour. It makes me feel quite all-overish.'

'What on earth put Lord Nelson into your head?' said my cousin.

'I'm sure I don't know.'

'Do you like me the same way you like Lord Nelson, Nell?'

'Yes,' I said, 'only more.' With which small ray of encouragement poor Sol had to be content, as Elsie and Miss Maberley came rustling into the room and put an end to our *tête-à-tête*.

I certainly did like my cousin. I knew what a simple true nature lay beneath his quiet exterior. The idea of having Sol Barker for a lover, however—Sol, whose very name was synonymous with bashfulness—was too incredible. Why couldn't he fall in love with Grace or with Elsie? They might have known what to do with him; they were older than I, and could encourage him, or snub him, as they thought best. Gracie, however, was carrying on a mild flirtation with my brother Bob, and Elsie seemed utterly unconscious of the whole matter. I have one characteristic recollection of my cousin which I cannot help introducing here, though it has nothing to do with the thread of the narrative. It was on the occasion of his first visit to Hatherley House. The wife of the Rector called one day, and the responsibility of entertaining her rested with Sol and myself. We got on very well at first. Sol was unusually lively and talkative. Unfortunately a hospitable

impulse came upon him; and in spite of many warning nods and winks, he asked the visitor if he might offer her a glass of wine. Now, as ill luck would have it, our supply had just been finished, and though we had written to London, a fresh consignment had not yet arrived. I listened breathlessly for the answer, trusting she would refuse; but to my horror she accepted with alacrity. 'Never mind ringing, Nell,' said Sol, 'I'll act as butler;' and with a confident smile he marched into the little cupboard in which the decanters were usually kept. It was not until he was well in that he suddenly recollected having heard us mention in the morning that there was none in the house. His mental anguish was so great that he spent the remainder of Mrs. Salter's visit in the cupboard, utterly refusing to come out until after her departure. Had there been any possibility of the winepress having another egress, or leading anywhere, matters would not have been so bad; but I knew that old Mrs. Salter was as well up in the geography of the house as I was myself. She stayed for three-quarters of an hour waiting for Sol's reappearance, and then went away in high dudgeon. 'My dear,' she said, recounting the incident to her husband, and breaking into semi-scriptural language in the violence of her indignation, 'the cupboard seemed to open and swallow him!'

'Jack is coming down by the two o'clock train,' said Bob one morning, coming in to breakfast with a telegram in his hand.

I could see Sol looking at me reproachfully; but that did not prevent me from showing my delight at the intelligence.

'We'll have awful fun when

he comes,' said Bob. 'We'll drag the fish-pond, and have no end of a lark. Won't it be jolly, Sol?'

Sol's opinion of its jollity was evidently too great to be expressed in words; for he gave an inarticulate grunt as answer.

I had a long cogitation on the subject of Jack in the garden that morning. After all, I was becoming a big girl, as Bob had forcibly reminded me. I must be circumspect in my conduct now. A real live man had actually looked upon me with the eyes of love. It was all very well when I was a child to have Jack following me about and kissing me; but I must keep him at a distance now. I remembered how he presented me with a dead fish once which he had taken out of the Hatherley Brook, and how I treasured it up among my most precious possessions, until an insidious odour in the house had caused the mother to send an abusive letter to Mr. Burton, who had pronounced our drainage to be all that could be desired. I must learn to be formal and distant. I pictured our meeting to myself, and went through a rehearsal of it. The holly-bush represented Jack, and I approached it solemnly, made it a stately curtesy, and held out my hand with, 'So glad to see you, Lieutenant Hawthorne!' Elsie came out while I was doing it, but made no remark. I heard her ask Sol at luncheon, however, whether idiocy generally ran in families, or was simply confined to individuals; at which poor Sol blushed furiously, and became utterly incoherent in his attempts at an explanation.

Our farmyard opens upon the avenue about half-way between Hatherley House and the lodge. Sol and I and Mr. Nicholas Cronin, the son of a neighbour-

ing squire, went down there after lunch. This imposing demonstration was for the purpose of quelling a mutiny which had broken out in the henhouse. The earliest tidings of the rising had been conveyed to the House by young Bayliss, son and heir of the henkeeper, and my presence had been urgently requested. Let me remark in parenthesis that fowls were my special department in domestic economy, and that no step was ever taken in their management without my advice and assistance. Old Bayliss hobbled out upon our arrival, and informed us of the full extent of the disturbance. It seems that the crested hen and the Bantam cock had developed such length of wing that they were enabled to fly over into the park; and that the example of these ringleaders had been so contagious, that even such steady old matrons as the bandy-legged Cochin China had developed roving propensities, and pushed their way into forbidden ground. A council of war was held in the yard, and it was unanimously decided that the wings of the recalcitrants must be clipped.

What a scamper we had! By 'we' I mean Mr. Cronin and myself; while cousin Sol hovered about in the background with the scissors, and cheered us on. The two culprits clearly knew that they were wanted; for they rushed under the hayricks and over the coops, until there seemed to be at least half a dozen crested hens and Bantam cocks dodging about in the yard. The other hens were mildly interested in the proceedings, and contented themselves with an occasional derisive cluck, with the exception of the favourite wife of the Bantam, who abused us roundly from the top of the coop. The ducks were the most aggravating por-

tion of the community; for though they had nothing to do with the original disturbance, they took a warm interest in the fugitives, waddling behind them as fast as their little yellow legs would carry them, and getting in the way of the pursuers.

'We have it!' I gasped, as the crested hen was driven into a corner. 'Catch it, Mr. Cronin! O, you've missed it! you've missed it! Get in the way, Sol. O dear, it's coming to me!'

'Well done, Miss Montague!' cried Mr. Cronin, as I seized the wretched fowl by the leg as it fluttered past me, and proceeded to tuck it under my arm to prevent any possibility of escape. 'Let me carry it for you.'

'No, no; I want you to catch the cock. There it goes! There—behind the hayrick. You go to one side, and I'll go to the other.'

'It's going through the gate!' shouted Sol.

'Shoo!' cried I. 'Shoo! O, it's gone!' and we both made a dart into the park in pursuit, tore round the corner into the avenue, and there I found myself face to face with a sunburned young man in a tweed suit, who was lounging along in the direction of the House.

There was no mistaking those laughing gray eyes, though I think if I had never looked at him some instinct would have told me that it was Jack. How could I be dignified with the crested hen tucked under my arm? I tried to pull myself up; but the miserable bird seemed to think that it had found a protector at last, for it began to cluck with redoubled vehemence. I had to give it up in despair, and burst into a laugh, while Jack did the same.

'How are you, Nell?' he said, holding out his hand; and then

in an astonished voice, 'Why, you're not a bit the same as when I saw you last!'

'Well, I hadn't a hen under my arm then,' said I.

'Who would have thought that little Nell would have developed into a woman?' said Jack, still lost in amazement.

'You didn't expect me to develop into a man, did you?' said I in high indignation; and then, suddenly dropping all reserve, 'We're awfully glad you've come, Jack. Never mind going up to the House. Come and help us to catch that Bantam cock.'

'Right you are,' said Jack in his old cheery way, still keeping his eyes firmly fixed upon my countenance. 'Come on!' and away the three of us scampered across the park, with poor Sol aiding and abetting with the scissors and the prisoner in the rear. Jack was a very crumpled-looking visitor by the time he paid his respects to the mother that afternoon, and my dreams of dignity and reserve were scattered to the winds.

We had quite a party at Hatherley House that May. There were Bob, and Sol, and Jack Hawthorne, and Mr. Nicholas Cronin; then there were Miss Maberley, and Elsie, and mother, and myself. On an emergency we could always muster half a dozen visitors from the houses round, so as to have an audience when charades or private theatricals were attempted. Mr. Cronin, an easy-going athletic young Oxford man, proved to be a great acquisition, having wonderful powers of organisation and execution. Jack was not nearly as lively as he used to be, in fact we unanimously accused him of being in love; at which he looked as silly as young men usually do on such occasions,

but did not attempt to deny the soft impeachment.

'What shall we do to-day?' said Bob one morning. 'Can anybody make a suggestion?'

'Drag the pond,' said Mr. Cronin.

'Haven't men enough,' said Bob; 'anything else?'

'We must get up a sweepstakes for the Derby,' remarked Jack.

'O, there's plenty of time for that. It isn't run till the week after next. Anything else?'

'Lawn-tennis,' said Sol dubiously.

'Bother lawn-tennis!'

'You might make a picnic to Hatherley Abbey,' said I.

'Capital!' cried Mr. Cronin. 'The very thing. What do you think, Bob?'

'First class,' said my brother, grasping eagerly at the idea. Picnics are very dear to those who are in the first stage of the tender passion.

'Well, how are we to go, Nell?' asked Elsie.

'I won't go at all,' said I; 'I'd like to awfully, but I have to plant those ferns Sol got me. You had better walk. It is only three miles, and young Bayliss can be sent over with the basket of provisions.'

'You'll come, Jack?' said Bob.

Here was another impediment. The Lieutenant had twisted his ankle yesterday. He had not mentioned it to any one at the time; but it was beginning to pain him now.

'Couldn't do it, really,' said Jack. 'Three miles there and three back!'

'Come on. Don't be lazy,' said Bob.

'My dear fellow,' answered the Lieutenant, 'I have had walking enough to last me the rest of my life. If you had seen how that energetic general of ours bustled

me along from Cabul to Candahar, you'd sympathise with me.'

'Leave the veteran alone,' said Mr. Nicholas Cronin.

'Pity the war-worn soldier,' remarked Bob.

'None of your chaff,' said Jack. 'I'll tell you what I'll do,' he added, brightening up. 'You let me have the trap, Bob, and I'll drive over with Nell as soon as she has finished planting her ferns. We can take the basket with us. You'll come, won't you, Nell?'

'All right,' said I. And Bob having given his assent to the arrangement, and everybody being pleased, except Mr. Solomon Barker, who glared with mild malignancy at the soldier, the matter was finally settled, and the whole party proceeded to get ready, and finally departed down the avenue.

It was an extraordinary thing how that ankle improved after the last of the troop had passed round the curve of the hedge. By the time the ferns were planted and the gig got ready Jack was as active and lively as ever he was in his life.

'You seem to have got better very suddenly,' I remarked, as we drove down the narrow winding country lane.

'Yes,' said Jack. 'The fact is, Nell, there never was anything the matter with me. I wanted to have a talk with you.'

'You don't mean to say you would tell a lie in order to have a talk with me?' I remonstrated.

'Forty,' said Jack stoutly.

I was too lost in contemplation of the depths of guile in Jack's nature to make any further remark. I wondered whether Elsie would be flattered or indignant were any one to offer to tell so many lies in her behalf.

'We used to be good friends

when we were children, Nell,' remarked my companion.

'Yes,' said I, looking down at the rug which was thrown over my knees. I was beginning to be quite an experienced young lady by this time, you see, and to understand certain inflections of the masculine voice, which are only to be acquired by practice.

'You don't seem to care for me now as much as you did then,' said Jack.

I was still intensely absorbed in the leopard's skin in front of me.

'Do you know, Nelly,' continued Jack, 'that when I have been camping out in the frozen passes of the Himalayas, when I have seen the hostile array in front of me; in fact,' suddenly dropping into bathos, 'all the time I was in that beastly hole Afghanistan, I used to think of the little girl I had left in England.'

'Indeed!' I murmured.

'Yes,' said Jack, 'I bore the memory of you in my heart, and then when I came back you were a little girl no longer. I found you a beautiful woman, Nelly, and I wondered whether you had forgotten the days that were gone.'

Jack was becoming quite poetical in his enthusiasm. By this time he had left the old bay pony entirely to its own devices, and it was indulging in its chronic propensity of stopping and admiring the view.

'Look here, Nelly,' said Jack, with a gasp like a man who is about to pull the string of his shower-bath, 'one of the things you learn in campaigning is to secure a good thing whenever you see it. Never delay or hesitate, for you never know that some other fellow may not carry it off while you are making up your mind.'

'It's coming now,' I thought in despair, 'and there's no window for Jack to escape by after he has made the plunge.' I had gradually got to associate the ideas of love and jumping out of windows, ever since poor Sol's confession.

'Do you think, Nell,' said Jack, 'that you could ever care for me enough to share my lot for ever? could you ever be my wife, Nell?'

He didn't even jump out of the trap. He sat there beside me, looking at me with his eager gray eyes, while the pony strolled along, cropping the wild flowers on either side of the road. It was quite evident that he intended having an answer. Somehow as I looked down I seemed to see a pale shy face looking in at me from a dark background, and to hear Sol's voice as he declared his love. Poor fellow! he was first in the field at any rate.

'Could you, Nell?' asked Jack once more.

'I like you very much, Jack,' said I, looking up at him nervously; 'but'—how his face changed at that monosyllable!—'I don't think I like you enough for that. Besides, I'm so young, you know. I suppose I ought to be very much complimented and that sort of thing by your offer; but you mustn't think of me in that light any more.'

'You refuse me, then?' said Jack, turning a little white.

'Why don't you go and ask Elsie?' cried I in despair. 'Why should you all come to me?'

'I don't want Elsie,' cried Jack, giving the pony a cut with his whip which rather astonished that easy-going quadruped. 'What do you mean by "all," Nell?'

No answer.

'I see how it is,' said Jack bitterly; 'I've noticed how that cousin of yours has been hanging

round you ever since I have been here. You are engaged to him.'

'No, I'm not,' said I.

'Thank God for that!' responded Jack devoutly. 'There is some hope yet. Perhaps you will come to think better of it in time. Tell me, Nelly, are you fond of that fool of a medical student?'

'He isn't a fool,' said I indignantly, 'and I am quite as fond of him as I shall ever be of you.'

'You might not care for him much and still be that,' said Jack sulkily; and neither of us spoke again until a joint bellow from Bob and Mr. Cronin announced the presence of the rest of the company.

If the picnic was a success, it was entirely due to the exertions of the latter gentleman. Three lovers out of four was an undue proportion, and it took all his convivial powers to make up for the shortcomings of the rest. Bob seemed entirely absorbed in Miss Maberley's charms, poor Elsie was left out in the cold, while my two admirers spent their time in glaring alternately at me and at each other. Mr. Cronin, however, fought gallantly against the depression, making himself agreeable to all, and exploring ruins or drawing corks with equal vehemence and energy.

Cousin Sol was particularly disheartened and out of spirits. He thought, no doubt, that my solitary ride with Jack had been a prearranged thing between us. There was more sorrow than anger in his eyes, however, while Jack, I regret to say, was decidedly ill-tempered. It was this fact which made me choose out my cousin as my companion in the ramble through the woods which succeeded our lunch. Jack had been assuming a provoking air of proprietorship lately, which I was determined to quash once for all.

I felt angry with him, too, for appearing to consider himself ill used at my refusal, and for trying to disparage poor Sol behind his back. I was far from loving either the one or the other, but somehow my girlish ideas of fair play revolted at either of them taking what I considered an unfair advantage. I felt that if Jack had not come I should, in the fulness of time, have ended by accepting my cousin; on the other hand, if it had not been for Sol, I might never have refused Jack. At present I was too fond of them both to favour either. 'How in the world is it to end?' thought I. I must do something decisive one way or the other; or perhaps the best thing would be to wait and see what the future might bring forth.

Sol seemed mildly surprised at my having selected him as my companion, but accepted the offer with a grateful smile. His mind seemed to have been vastly relieved.

'So I haven't lost you yet, Nell,' he murmured, as we branched off among the great tree-trunks and heard the voices of the party growing fainter in the distance.

'Nobody can lose me,' said I, 'for nobody has won me yet. For goodness' sake don't talk about it any more. Why can't you talk like your old self two years ago, and not be so dreadfully sentimental?'

'You'll know why some day, Nell,' said the student reproachfully. 'Wait until you are in love yourself, and you will understand it.'

I gave a little incredulous sniff. 'Sit here, Nell,' said cousin Sol, manœuvring me into a little bank of wild strawberries and mosses, and perching himself upon a stump of a tree beside me. 'Now all I ask you to do is to answer one or two questions,

and I'll never bother you any more.'

I sat resignedly, with my hands in my lap.

'Are you engaged to Lieutenant Hawthorne?'

'No!' said I energetically.

'Are you fonder of him than of me?'

'No, I'm not.'

Sol's thermometer of happiness up to a hundred in the shade at the least.

'Are you fonder of me than of him, Nelly?' in a very tender voice.

'No.'

Thermometer down below zero again.

'Do you mean to say that we are exactly equal in your eyes?'

'Yes.'

'But you must choose between us some time, you know,' said cousin Sol with mild reproach in his voice.

'I do wish you wouldn't bother me so!' I cried, getting angry, as women usually do when they are in the wrong. 'You don't care for me much or you wouldn't plague me. I believe the two of you will drive me mad between you.'

Here there were symptoms of sobs on my part, and utter consternation and defeat among the Barker faction.

'Can't you see how it is, Sol?' said I, laughing through my tears at his woe-begone appearance. 'Suppose you were brought up with two girls and had got to like them both very much, but had never preferred one to the other and never dreamed of marrying either, and then all of a sudden you are told you must choose one, and so make the other very unhappy, you wouldn't find it an easy thing to do, would you?'

'I suppose not,' said the student.

'Then you can't blame me.'

'I don't blame you, Nelly,' he answered, attacking a great purple toadstool with his stick. 'I think you are quite right to be sure of your own mind. It seems to me,' he continued, speaking rather gaspily, but saying his mind like the true English gentleman that he was, 'it seems to me that Hawthorne is an excellent fellow. He has seen more of the world than I have, and always does and says the right thing in the right place, which certainly isn't one of my characteristics. Then he is well born and has good prospects. I think I should be very grateful to you for your hesitation, Nell, and look upon it as a sign of your good-heartedness.'

'We won't talk about it any more,' said I, thinking in my heart what a very much finer fellow he was than the man he was praising. 'Look here, my jacket is all stained with horrid fungi and things. We'd better go after the rest of the party, hadn't we? I wonder where they are by this time?'

It didn't take very long to find that out. At first we heard shouting and laughter coming echoing through the long glades, and then, as we made our way in that direction, we were astonished to meet the usually phlegmatic Elsie careering through the wood at the very top of her speed, her hat off, and her hair streaming in the wind. My first idea was that some frightful catastrophe had occurred—brigands possibly, or a mad dog—and I saw my companion's big hand close round his stick; but on meeting the fugitive it proved to be nothing more tragic than a game of hide-and-seek which the indefatigable Mr. Cronin had organised. What fun we had, crouching and running and dodging among the Hatherley oaks! and how horrified the prim old abbot who planted them

would have been, and the long series of black-coated brethren who have muttered their orisons beneath the welcome shade! Jack refused to play on the excuse of his weak ankle, and lay smoking under a tree in high dudgeon, glaring in a baleful and gloomy fashion at Mr. Solomon Barker; while the latter gentleman entered enthusiastically into the game, and distinguished himself by always getting caught, and never by any possibility catching anybody else.

Poor Jack! He was certainly unfortunate that day. Even an accepted lover would have been rather put out, I think, by an incident which occurred during our return home. It was agreed that all of us should walk, as the trap had been already sent off with the empty basket, so we started down Thorny Lane and through the fields. We were just getting over a stile to cross old Brown's ten-acre lot, when Mr. Cronin pulled up, and remarked that he thought we had better get into the road.

'Road?' said Jack. 'Nonsense! We save a quarter of a mile by the field.'

'Yes, but it's rather dangerous. We'd better go round.'

'Where's the danger?' said our military man, contemptuously twisting his moustache.

'O, nothing,' said Cronin. 'That quadruped in the middle of the field is a bull, and not a very good-tempered one either. That's all. I don't think that the ladies should be allowed to go.'

'We won't go,' said the ladies in chorus.

'Then come round by the hedge and get into the road,' suggested Sol.

'You may go as you like,' said Jack rather testily; 'but I am going across the field.'

'Don't be a fool, Jack,' said my brother.

'You fellows may think it right to turn tail at an old cow, but I don't. It hurts my self-respect, you see, so I shall join you at the other side of the farm.' With which speech Jack buttoned up his coat in a truculent manner, waved his cane jauntily, and swaggered off into the ten-acre lot.

We clustered about the stile and watched the proceedings with anxiety. Jack tried to look as if he were entirely absorbed in the view and in the probable state of the weather, for he gazed about him and up into the clouds in an abstracted manner. His gaze generally began and ended, however, somewhere in the direction of the bull. That animal, after regarding the intruder with a prolonged stare, had retreated into the shadow of the hedge at one side, while Jack was walking up the long axis of the field.

'It's all right,' said I. 'It's got out of his way.'

'I think it's leading him on,' said Mr. Nicholas Cronin. 'It's a vicious cunning brute.'

Mr. Cronin had hardly spoken before the bull emerged from the hedge, and began pawing the ground, and tossing its wicked black head in the air. Jack was in the middle of the field by this time, and affected to take no notice of his companion, though he quickened his pace slightly. The bull's next manœuvre was to run rapidly round in two or three small circles; and then it suddenly stopped, bellowed, put down its head, elevated its tail, and made for Jack at the very top of its speed.

There was no use pretending to ignore its existence any longer. Jack faced round and gazed at it for a moment. He had only his

little cane in his hand to oppose to the half ton of irate beef which was charging towards him. He did the only thing that was possible, namely to make for the hedge at the other side of the field.

At first Jack hardly condescended to run, but went off with a languid contemptuous trot, a sort of compromise between his dignity and his fear, which was so ludicrous that, frightened as we were, we burst into a chorus of laughter. By degrees, however, as he heard the galloping of hoofs sounding nearer and nearer, he quickened his pace, until ultimately he was in full flight for shelter, with his hat gone and his coat-tails fluttering in the breeze, while his pursuer was not ten yards behind him. If all Ayoub Khan's cavalry had been in his rear, our Afghan hero could not have done the distance in a shorter time. Quickly as he went, the bull went quicker still, and the two seemed to gain the hedge almost at the same moment. We saw Jack spring boldly into it, and the next moment he came flying out at the other side as if he had been discharged from a cannon, while the bull indulged in a series of triumphant bellows through the hole which he had made. It was a relief to us all to see Jack gather himself up and start off for home without a glance in our direction. He had retired to his room by the time we arrived, and did not appear until breakfast next morning, when he limped in with a very crestfallen expression. None of us was hard-hearted enough to allude to the subject, however, and by judicious treatment we restored him before lunch-time to his usual stute of equanimity.

It was a couple of days after the picnic that our great Derby

sweepstakes was to come off. This was an annual ceremony never omitted at Hatherley House, where, between visitors and neighbours, there were generally quite as many candidates for tickets as there were horses entered.

'The sweepstakes, ladies and gentlemen, comes off to-night,' said Bob in his character of head of the house. 'The subscription is ten shillings. Second gets quarter of the pool, and third has his money returned. No one is allowed to have more than one ticket, or to sell his ticket after drawing it. The drawing will be at seven thirty.' All of which Bob delivered in a very pompous and official voice, though the effect was rather impaired by a sonorous 'Amen!' from Mr. Nicholas Cronin.

I must now drop the personal style of narrative for a time. Hitherto my little story has consisted simply in a series of extracts from my own private journal; but now I have to tell of a scene which only came to my ears after many months.

Lieutenant Hawthorne, or Jack, as I cannot help calling him, had been very quiet since the day of the picnic, and given himself up to reverie. Now, as luck would have it, Mr. Solomon Barker sauntered into the smoking-room after luncheon on the day of the sweepstakes, and found the Lieutenant puffing moodily in solitary grandeur upon one of the settees. It would have seemed cowardly to retreat, so the student sat down in silence, and began turning over the pages of the *Graphic*. Both the rivals felt the situation to be an awkward one. They had been in the habit of studiously avoiding each other's society, and now they found themselves thrown together suddenly, with no third

person to act as a buffer. The silence began to be oppressive. The Lieutenant yawned and coughed with over-acted nonchalance, while honest Sol felt very hot and uncomfortable, and continued to stare gloomily at the paper in his hand. The ticking of the clock, and the click of the billiard-balls across the passage, seemed to grow unendurably loud and monotonous. Sol glanced across once; but catching his companion's eye in an exactly similar action, the two young men seemed simultaneously to take a deep and all-absorbing interest in the pattern of the cornice.

'Why should I quarrel with him?' thought Sol to himself. 'After all, I want nothing but fair play. Probably I shall be snubbed; but I may as well give him an opening.'

Sol's cigar had gone out; the opportunity was too good to be neglected.

'Could you oblige me with a fusee, Lieutenant?' he asked.

The Lieutenant was sorry—extremely sorry—but he was not in possession of a fusee.

This was a bad beginning. Chilly politeness was even more repulsing than absolute rudeness. But Mr. Solomon Barker, like many other shy men, was audacity itself when the ice had once been broken. He would have no more bickerings or misunderstandings. Now was the time to come to some definite arrangement. He pulled his armchair across the room, and planted himself in front of the astonished soldier.

'You're in love with Miss Nelly Montague,' he remarked.

Jack sprang off the settee with as much rapidity as if Farmer Brown's bull were coming in through the window.

'And if I am, sir,' he said, twist-

ing his tawny moustache, 'what the devil is that to you?'

'Don't lose your temper,' said Sol. 'Sit down again, and talk the matter over like a reasonable Christian. I am in love with her too.'

'What the deuce is the fellow driving at?' thought Jack, as he resumed his seat, still simmering after his recent explosion.

'So the long and the short of it is that we are both in love with her,' continued Sol, emphasising his remarks with his bony forefinger.

'What then?' said the Lieutenant, showing some symptoms of a relapse. 'I suppose that the best man will win, and that the young lady is quite able to choose for herself. You don't expect me to stand out of the race just because you happen to want the prize, do you?'

'That's just it,' cried Sol. 'One of us will have to stand out. You've hit the right idea there. You see, Nelly—Miss Montague, I mean—is, as far as I can see, rather fonder of you than of me, but still fond enough of me not to wish to grieve me by a positive refusal.'

'Honesty compels me to state,' said Jack, in a more conciliatory voice than he had made use of hitherto, 'that Nelly—Miss Montague, I mean—is rather fonder of *you* than of me; but still, as you say, fond enough of me not to prefer my rival openly in my presence.'

'I don't think you're right,' said the student. 'In fact I know you are not; for she told me as much with her own lips. However, what you say makes it easier for us to come to an understanding. It is quite evident that as long as we show ourselves to be equally fond of her, neither of us can have the slightest hope of winning her.'

'There's some sense in that,' said the Lieutenant reflectively; 'but what do you propose?'

'I propose that one of us stand out, to use your own expression. There is no alternative.'

'But who is to stand out?' asked Jack.

'Ah, that is the question.'

'I can claim to having known her longest.'

'I can claim to having loved her first.'

Matters seemed to have come to a deadlock. Neither of the young men was in the least inclined to abdicate in favour of his rival.

'Look here,' said the student, 'let us decide the matter by lot.'

This seemed fair, and was agreed to by both. A new difficulty arose, however. Both of them felt sentimental objections towards risking their angel upon such a paltry chance as the turn of a coin or the length of a straw. It was at this crisis that an inspiration came upon Lieutenant Hawthorne.

'I'll tell you how we will decide it,' he said. 'You and I are both entered for our Derby sweepstakes. If your horse beats mine, I give up my chance; if mine beats yours, you leave Miss Montague for ever. Is it a bargain?'

'I have only one stipulation to make,' said Sol. 'It is ten days yet before the race will be run. During that time neither of us must attempt to take an unfair advantage of the other. We shall both agree not to press our suit until the matter is decided.'

'Done!' said the soldier.

'Done!' said Solomon.

And they shook hands upon the agreement.

I had, as I have already observed, no knowledge of the con-

versation which had taken place between my suitors. I may mention incidentally that during the course of it I was in the library, listening to Tennyson, read aloud in the deep musical voice of Mr. Nicholas Cronin. I observed, however, in the evening that these two young men seemed remarkably excited about their horses, and that neither of them was in the least inclined to make himself agreeable to me, for which crime I am happy to say that they were both punished by drawing rank outsiders. Eurydice, I think, was the name of Sol's; while Jack's was Bicycle. Mr. Cronin drew an American horse named Iroquois, and all the others seemed fairly well pleased. I peeped into the smoking-room before going to bed, and was amused to see Jack consulting the sporting prophet of the *Field*, while Sol was deeply immersed in the *Gazette*. This sudden mania for the Turf seemed all the more strange, since I knew that if my cousin could distinguish a horse from a cow, it was as much as any of his friends would give him credit for.

The ten succeeding days were voted very slow by various members of the household. I cannot say that I found them so. Perhaps that was because I discovered something very unexpected and pleasing in the course of that period. It was a relief to be free of any fear of wounding the susceptibilities of either of my former lovers. I could say what I chose and do what I liked now; for they had deserted me completely, and handed me over to the society of my brother Bob and Mr. Nicholas Cronin. The new excitement of horse-racing seemed to have driven their former passion completely out of their minds. Never was a house

so deluged with special tips and every vile print which could by any possibility have a word bearing upon the training of the horses or their antecedents. The very grooms in the stable were tired of recounting how Bicycle was descended from Velocipede, or explaining to the anxious medical student how Eurydice was by Orpheus out of Hades. One of them discovered that her maternal grandmother had come in third for the Ebor Handicap; but the curious way in which he stuck the half crown which he received into his left eye, while he winked at the coachman with his right, throws some doubt upon the veracity of his statement. As he remarked in a beery whisper that evening, 'The bloke 'll never know the differ, and it's worth 'arf a dollar for him to think as it's true.'

As the day drew nearer the excitement increased. Mr. Cronin and I used to glance across at each other and smile as Jack and Sol precipitated themselves upon the papers at breakfast, and devoured the list of the betting. But matters culminated upon the evening immediately preceding the race. The Lieutenant had run down to the station to secure the latest intelligence, and now he came rushing in, waving a crushed paper frantically over his head.

'Eurydice is scratched!' he yelled. 'Your horse is done for, Barker!'

'What!' roared Sol.

'Done for—utterly broken down in training—won't run at all!'

'Let me see,' groaned my cousin, seizing the paper; and then, dropping it, he rushed out of the room, and banged down the stairs, taking four at a time. We saw no more of him until late at night, when he slunk in, looking very

dishevelled, and crept quietly off to his room. Poor fellow, I should have consoled with him had it not been for his recent disloyal conduct towards myself.

Jack seemed a changed man from that moment. He began at once to pay me marked attention, very much to the annoyance of myself and of some one else in the room. He played and sang and proposed round games, and, in fact, quite usurped the rôle usually played by Mr. Nicholas Cronin.

I remember that it struck me as remarkable that on the morning of the Derby-day the Lieutenant should have entirely lost his interest in the race. He was in the greatest spirits at breakfast, but did not even open the paper in front of him. It was Mr. Cronin who unfolded it at last and glanced over its columns.

'What's the news, Nick?' asked my brother Bob.

'Nothing much. O yes, here's something. Another railway accident. Collision apparently. Westinghouse brake gone wrong. Two killed, seven hurt, and—by Jove! listen to this: "Among the victims was one of the competitors in the equine Olympiad of to-day. A sharp splinter had penetrated its side, and the valuable animal had to be sacrificed upon the shrine of humanity. The name of the horse is Bicycle." Hullo, you've gone and spilt your coffee all over the cloth, Hawthorne! Ah, I forgot, Bicycle was your horse, wasn't it? Your chance is gone, I am afraid. I see that Iroquois, who started low, has come to be first favourite now.'

Ominous words, reader, as no doubt your nice discernment has taught you during, at the least, the last three columns. Don't call me a flirt and a coquette until

you have weighed the facts. Consider my pique at the sudden desertion of my admirers, think of my delight at the confession from a man whom I had tried to conceal from myself even that I loved, think of the opportunities which he enjoyed during the time that Jack and Sol were systematically avoiding me, in accordance with their ridiculous agreement. Weigh all this, and then which among you will throw the first stone at the blushing little prize of the Derby Sweep?

Here it is as it appeared at the end of three short months in the *Morning Post*: 'August 12th.—At Hatherley Church, Nicholas Cronin, Esq., eldest son of Nicholas Cronin, Esq., of the Woodlands, Cropshire, to Miss Eleanor Montague, daughter of the late James Montague, Esq., J.P., of Hatherley House.'

Jack set off with the declared intention of volunteering for a ballooning expedition to the North Pole. He came back, however, in three days, and said that he had changed his mind, but intended to walk in Stanley's footsteps across Equatorial Africa.

Since then he has dropped one or two gloomy allusions to forlorn hopes and the unutterable joys of death; but on the whole he is coming round very nicely, and has been heard to grumble of late on such occasions as the under-doing of the mutton and the over-doing of the beef, which may be fairly set down as a very healthy symptom.

Sol took it more quietly, but I fear the iron went deeper into his soul. However, he pulled himself together like a dear brave fellow as he is, and actually had the hardihood to propose the bridesmaids, on which occasion he became inextricably mixed up in a labyrinth of words. He washed his hands of the mutinous sentence, however, and resumed his seat in the middle of it, overwhelmed with blushes and applause. I hear that he has confided his woes and his disappointments to Grace Maberley's sister, and met with the sympathy which he expected. Bob and Gracie are to be married in a few months, so possibly there may be another wedding about that time.

A. CONAN DOYLE, M.B.

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

XXVI.

SIR JOHN BROWN.

'JOHN BROWN' The name is not entirely undistinguished in the annals of remarkable men, nor has it been unhonoured of the lyric Muse; but it requires, notwithstanding, an effort of the imagination to lift it out of the dull inglorious company of Smith, Jones, and Robinson. Upon a young man of humble antecedents just awakening to the serious side of life, and about to weigh his chances of making a mark in the world, it may easily be understood to produce a certain depression, to convey to him a discouraging premonition of failure, a chafing consciousness that another grim janitor was added to

'Those twin gaoles of the daring heart—
Low birth and iron fortune.'

Charles Kean indicated the other extreme when he said that his father was the greatest enemy of his life. The eminent Edmund set the name of Kean high in the bead-roll of genius, and left his son the hopeless task of sustaining it at the high-water mark. It may be a whimsical extravagance to suppose that the subject of this paper was hampered by the unheroic traditions of his patronymic, but remembering how much there is (or is not) in a name, we may fairly assume that one of his minor tasks was to prove that the name of Brown was not necessarily the brand of mediocrity. What might be a purely imaginary difficulty to-day when every lad is sent forth into

the fray armed *cap-à-pie* with all the weapons he requires save those which nature gives him, was often a substantial hindrance when Sir John Brown made his bow to the commercial world. At all events, the youth who fought his way to a place amid the galaxy of industrial knights whose honours are the harvest of one generation—Sir Josiah Mason, Sir Henry Bessemer, Sir Titus Salt, Sir Joseph Whitworth, Sir William Armstrong among the number—took up the gauntlet which Fortune had thrown down to him under a social system which made the competition between even a rich dunce and a poor genius a cruelly unequal match. Young John Brown was poor. Whether we may claim for him the attribute of genius must be gathered from the narrative of the success which he achieved and the way in which he achieved it. Carlyle defines genius as an infinite capacity for taking pains, and that infinite capacity, at least, was the birthright of John Brown. To his common name he united uncommon powers and uncommon qualities; and in the story which traces the gradual mastery of the innate strength over the external barriers the sentimental reader will not fail to detect a strand of romance which imparts a poetical charm to even a tale of steel, and which may prevent the iron from entering into his soul too deeply.

The history of Sir John Brown's career runs parallel with the in-

dustrial history of modern Sheffield. Fifty years ago Sheffield had not earned its distinction as the first smoke-producing town in the kingdom. Those casual critics who twit Hallamshire people with the dirty density of their atmosphere and flatter themselves that there is a sting in the taunt may deceive themselves. Even Charles Reade's desperately insulting allusion to 'this infernal city, whose water is blacking and whose air is coal,' diverted rather than annoyed the true-born Sheffielder. The patriotic Londoner who feels called upon to undertake the melancholy task of defending his indefensible fog has no idea of the contempt of Steelopolis for the horror which strangers affect at sight of what the author of the wondrous 'Hillsborough' romance again calls the 'acres of crape' which are supposed to make the place the abode of despair. An ex-master cutler lately spoke in tearful tones of the untoward return to comparative purity and buoyancy which the local atmosphere had of late years undergone. The fact is that smoke in Sheffield means not only fire, but food and fortune. There is much to be said for this artificial cloud-land from many points of view, but the painter will pour forth his soul in volumes in praise of the volumes of Vulcan as they coquet with the sun, and sidle into the company of the purified vapours of the heavens. Sir John Brown is largely responsible for the eminence, bad or good, which Sheffield has earned in the matter of smoke. When he entered upon his career the town was the cutlery capital and nothing more. Now it is the centre of the great South Yorkshire iron trade, and of that trade Sir John has been called 'the father.' The manufacture of cutlery laid gentle tri-

bute on all parts of the town, and suffused every street with a not unpleasant or unpicturesque film from its modest forges. The heavy iron trade fastened itself upon the then pastoral valley of the Don, called Attercliffe and Brightside (*sic*) into existence, as with a magic wand, and added a new terror to the east wind by making its rude breath the vehicle for the transportation of myriads of travelling 'blacks' in search of spotless window curtains and bed linen. Sheffield and its principal suburbs are right in the wake of this sooty simoom, since the 'black country,' through which the wintry blast filters, slopes down from the north-east shoulder of the town.

Sir John Brown was born in Sheffield in 1816. His father was a slater, and while his family were never so pinched by fortune as to suffer privation, yet the early circumstances of the lad savoured of the rough school from which so many dauntless heroes of industry have sprung, and which, by early accustoming its pupils to a share of the buffets of the world, prepare them to resist manfully in later life the shocks of failure, discouragement and disaster. In these early days young Brown was fortunate in two respects. In his father he had a mentor who united sterling old-fashioned virtues to a shrewd perception of the tendency of the age and of the advantages of education; and in his schoolmaster he found not only an enlightened and painstaking instructor, but a friend who probably had much to do with his start in the somewhat ambitious career upon which he had set his heart. The pastures of knowledge into which he was turned to browse were approached by three flights of stairs—most appropriately, it

might be said, for a 'rising' youth—and the modest dominie drew particular attention to his 'knowledge of the English language,' an acquirement which would not always be an entirely idle boast even in these latter days. Among the scholars of this unpretending garret-school were boys, besides young Brown, who were destined to make the names they bore eminent in local annals and familiar sounds in the world's ear. Under this roof, too—for children of both sexes imbibed knowledge from the same fount—sat, opposite to the slater's son, Miss Mary Schofield, afterwards to be gentle-hearted Lady Brown, whose death but a few months ago impoverished even the poor and awakened throughout Sheffield a thrill of tender regret. The fathers of the interesting pair thus destined to be associated from early youth to ripe age in all the gradations from lowly station to affluence and honour, were old friends, and Sir John, roving with a lingering fondness through the incidents of his early love, tells a story which is simple, even commonplace, in itself, but which, remembering that pity is akin to love, may have a significance beyond its superficial import. The schoolmaster, though not cruelly severe, belonged to the kingly race, now extinct, who had large ideas of pedagogic dignity, and who supported it with all the weight of their small despotism. When young Brown first appeared in the august presence he, with the daring of self-reliant precocity, failed to comport himself with the humility proper to the occasion, and in answer to all his tutor's interrogatories, gave a brusque 'Yessir!' and 'Nosir!' with an air of mock respect that unhinged the gravity of the assembled scholars, and

enabled them, like Goldsmith's rustics, to 'read the day's disasters' in the frowning countenance of the master. What dire punishment befell the offender we need not tell, but it is part of this love legend of Sir John's that his little sweetheart went home and acquainted her father with the audacity of 'poor Master Brown,' and tremblingly foreshadowed the terrible penalties that awaited him.

Instead of exciting permanent hostility, however, by this bold behaviour, 'poor Master Brown' became one of the pets of the master. His path over the thorny road to knowledge was made smooth and pleasant, and when the time came for the youth to cut himself adrift from the friendly anchor upon which he had accustomed himself to rely, his tutor rendered him good service in directing him into the right channel. The lad's father, in running through the list of eligible occupations for his son, had, for some reason or other, hit upon the trade of a linendraper, and propounded the idea to him. The youth met it with a determined negative. 'Why not?' demanded the father. 'I don't know, but I'll never be a linendraper.' Mr. Brown insisted, and the son resisted: 'If you put me to a linendraper I will run away—I will go to sea,' said he. This unwonted display of independent judgment somewhat staggered the parent, and led him to make the rather tardy inquiry as to what his son's choice was. 'I should like to be a merchant,' exclaimed young Brown; 'a merchant does business with all the world.' 'I had seen merchants in the town,' adds the veteran knight of to-day in explanation, and by way of condoning the wild ambition of this vague demand, 'and saw that

they were first-rate people, with large establishments, and the world at their feet.' The bold impracticability of the boy's simple programme startled and irritated his father, who, after he had recovered his breath, retorted severely, 'You will be what I say—a linendraper.' Another definite rejoinder escaped young Brown, and the scene closed with a peremptory command to leave the room. It was at this crisis that the counsel of the schoolmaster was sought, who strenuously held that the youth should not be put to any trade that he disliked. 'It shows there is something in the lad to talk about being a merchant,' he argued. 'No other boy in the school knows what it means.'

Thus it came about that in 1830, when in his fourteenth year, the lad was apprenticed to Messrs. Earl, Horton, & Co., a firm of merchants or factors, dealing in the wares of the town. At this period Sheffield was an unconsidered emporium of trade. It was not represented in Parliament. It was not an incorporated borough, and it was governed in a loose and fragmentary way by Police Commissioners and the Cutlers' Company, which latter, however, had no legal standing. By day it was pretty much left to take care of itself, and by night the duty of guardianship was shared between less than half a dozen watchmen of the 'Charley' type. The turbulent period of two years later did not pass away without bloodshed; but the town came out of the political crucible dignified with parliamentary representation, and recognised as one of the mainsprings of England's industrial progress. Those who know the Sheffield of to-day and are aware how closely The Wicker, The Moor, Rockingham-street, and Fitzwilliam-street lie against

the heart of the town may be surprised to learn that those crowded thoroughfares were then a heterogeneous mixture of country and town, of corn-fields and suburban cottages, upon which the pioneers of the local industries were preparing to pounce. Messrs. Earl, Horton, & Co.'s establishment was, at the time of John Brown's first association with it, in Orchard-place; but some six years later the firm embarked upon the manufacture of steel, files, and table cutlery, and removed to Rockingham-street, where they established the Hallamshire works. In the mean time the apprentice was discharging his duties with conspicuous ability and integrity, and though he received no wages at all during the first two years, and but six shillings a week for the remainder of his educational service, he was all the time unconsciously storing up in the minds of his employers seeds of goodwill, which, at the expiration of his term, showered upon him a profuse harvest of recompense. At the close of his novitiate his father gave him a sovereign and a suit of clothes, and bade him rely for his future success upon his own abilities and industry. When he became of age, however, a few months afterwards, Mr. Earl gave him a surprise which showed how deep was the impression which he had made upon his employers. This was no less than an invitation to enter the firm as a partner. Want of capital prevented the youth from availing himself of this generous offer; whereupon the kindly master offered him the factoring portion of the business of the firm, and in addition undertook to find money to assist him in conducting it. This opportunity was too good to be lost, and young Brown set himself to discover a means of raising his

share of the capital. His efforts resulted in one of his uncles, who was in good circumstances, joining with his father in guaranteeing 500*l.* to a bank in the town; and with this timely aid the founder of the great Atlas Works became master of a business. In this capacity he travelled through the country with horse and gig, carrying his own samples, and canvassing for his own orders. Later on he set up a four-wheeled sample carriage such as is used by one or two old-fashioned Sheffield houses to this day. By and by he made his own cutlery, and the taste for production increasing, he determined to enter upon the manufacture of steel. Too conscious of the kindness which he had received at the hands of his old employers to throw himself into competition with them against their will, he solicited and obtained from Mr. Earl their consent to this addition to his business enterprise.

With his energies thus unfettered he embarked upon that special line in which, with the intuition and foresight which form so remarkable a feature of his career, he perceived such vast and splendid possibilities. The staple products of the town he made a means rather than an end. He relied upon them during the unprofitable interval which always precedes new developments. He studied, and speculated, and experimented upon steel as the final and best product of the raw ore of the earth. The dawn of the railway era was his opportunity. He saw boundless demand in this new adjunct of civilisation, and boundless resources in the material to which he had devoted his attention. He removed to Furnival-street, applied himself solely to the production of steel, files, and railway springs, and disposed of his factoring business

to Messrs. H. G. Long & Co. For several years these articles were his chief manufactures; but another railway specialty was destined to carry him into the full tide of prosperity which he afterwards enjoyed. Up to 1848 railway rolling stock presented an appearance which would now appear strange—it was practically bufferless. Mr. Brown saw here a necessity which would soon become imperative, and he patented the conical spring buffer. Its success, for a novelty appealing to railway companies, was prompt, but by and by it became overwhelming. His first customers for it were the now thriving Taff Vale Railway Company, the Glasgow and South-Western, and the Dublin and Drogheda Companies. Before long he was turning out 150 sets per week. Shop after shop was added to his parent establishment in Furnival-street in various parts of the town, and a spring shop was taken at Rotherham. The inconvenience of these scattered branches became so oppressive that he soon began to cast about for an opportunity to concentrate and consolidate. The opportunity came in 1854, when the Queen's Works in Saville-street—the part of the town which is now dedicated to rolling-mills and steam-hammers—were offered for sale. These works covered three acres, only a third of which was built upon; and by way of contrast it may be mentioned that under their new title, the Atlas, they now embrace twenty-five acres. The only manufacturing emigrants of present importance that preceded Mr. Brown in this then rural region were Messrs. Charles Cammell & Co., and Messrs. Thomas Firth & Sons. In that day the sky was as blue and the air as pure in the Don Valley as in the Peak of Derbyshire. Wild flowers

danced before the office windows, and the tender foliage of adjacent woods for a short time resisted the blighting influences of furnace and forge. But ere long, as firm after firm added their sooty quota to the industrial settlement, the flowers ceased to bloom, the trees became stunted scarecrows, and the country landscape was blotted out. Now vegetable life is a tradition hard to believe in. Every yard of ground as far as the eye can reach (which, in times of 'prosperity,' is not far) is redolent of the devastating trade introduced by the subject of this paper.

But if the Atlas Works brought destruction to Nature they brought life and prosperity to man. The great exhibition had put trade generally upon its feet; but if there was an industry to which the vast show lent impetus and vigour it was the iron and steel trade. The age of iron had arrived with the railways, and in its train it had brought the germ of the age of steel, of which we see probably nearly the full development to day. Sheffield was always peculiarly the seat of the steel trade, and the railway material to which Mr. Brown had given his attention increased enormously the demand for what is called steel-iron. Hitherto this had come almost exclusively from Sweden and Russia, which the natural advantages of rich ore and unlimited charcoal resources still constitute important producing centres for raw material of the best class. Mr. Brown saw not only that the time must come when Sweden would be unable to respond to the ever-augmenting demand, but also that an important industry of a new and perfectly legitimate kind might be introduced into Sheffield. The only attempt to

produce iron for steel-making purposes at that time being made in this country was conducted at a small concern in Staffordshire, and practically none but foreign iron was used by the steel manufacturers. Mr. Brown, to use a northern phrase, 'put his mind in steep' on the subject. He gauged the difficulties, and speculated upon the consequences of success. He took the opportunity of mentioning the project at a meeting of Sheffield manufacturers, and was laughed at, as all great pioneers of industry are, as the pursuer of a chimera. The founder of the Atlas Works, however, was not a man to retreat before ridicule. Tenacity and resolution were the guardian sentinels of his genius, and throughout his active career they never permitted him to waver in the pursuit of an object which his judgment commended. The adverse reception of his scheme by his fellow-manufacturers stimulated rather than damped his determination, and before very long the men who had foretold failure came to swell the tide of his success, and buy from him iron which Sweden could not supply on the same terms. It was this achievement that conferred upon Sir John Brown the honourable title of the 'father of the iron trade' in South Yorkshire, and no doubt largely contributed to the continued supremacy of Sheffield as the metropolis of steel.

Having thus laid a foundation for business on a large scale, the proprietor of the Atlas Works threw all his prodigious energy and tact into the concern, and soon became one of the leading manufacturers of Sheffield. How rapidly his business increased at this time may be gathered from the fact that whilst in 1856 his turnover was 63,000*l.*, in the following year it had augmented by one

third, being 95,000*l*. To John Brown's acute perception and enterprise Mr. Bessemer owed not a little encouragement at a time when the famous Bessemer process of steel-making seemed to hang midway between success and failure. Mr. Brown did his best to turn the tide in the inventor's favour by taking and promptly availing himself of the first license to manufacture issued under Mr. Bessemer's patent.

During these early years of the Saville-street works many things were added to the list of their productions. The railway material trade floated Mr. Brown into prosperity, and this was reinforced from time to time by the addition of boiler- and bridge-plates, &c., as well as the manufacture of steel-iron already alluded to. But at this time the establishment, unconsciously to its head, was within measurable distance of a new departure which was destined to make not England alone, but all Europe, ring with the name of John Brown—the production of thick rolled plates for the defence of vessels of war. This portentous development of naval warfare may be said to have been due, like many other great discoveries, to accident. It is, indeed, a contribution to the romance of industrial history. Returning from a brief Continental tour in 1860, Mr. Brown found himself in Toulon, and into Toulon harbour steamed a French man-of-war of a new type which had given our Government some amount of anxious concern. It was the *La Gloire*, whose high decks had been 'improved off' the vessel, and such portions of her as could not conveniently be placed under water clad in iron armour four and a half inches in thickness. The ship not unnaturally excited the visitor's curiosity. He

asked to be allowed to go on board, but was refused. Under these circumstances he got as near to her as he could, examined her suit of mail at a respectful distance, and picked up as much information generally as astute officials could be made to drop. Mr. Brown found that the four and a half inch armour consisted of hammered plates five feet long and two feet wide. He returned to Sheffield, convinced that he could produce plates tougher, more uniform in strength, thicker, and larger by the process of rolling. It was a hazardous experiment, involving a large outlay in plant and patience, and tests almost as expensive. Nevertheless, he determined to take the risk. He erected a rolling mill, selected his workmen, buckled himself to the task, and in a short time, after some preliminary communications of a not very encouraging character with the Admiralty, he invited Lord Palmerston, then Prime Minister, to visit Sheffield, and see a plate rolled for himself.

It should be explained here that his busy life as a manufacturer had not prevented him from taking his share of the municipal cares of the town, and in this year of 1862 he was enabled to offer the Premier a chief magistrate's hospitality. Lord Palmerston responded to the invitation. The plate-rolling was a complete success, and his lordship saw an armour-slab turned out of the mill upwards of six tons in weight, measuring 18 ft. 6 in. long, 3 ft. 9 in. wide, and 5½ inches thick. Previous to that the Government appeared to have come to the easy—or uneasy—conclusion that no plate thicker than the French armour—four and a half inches—could be produced and adapted to the requirements of naval defence. When

we reflect that armour-clads are now riding the deep with apparent comfort wrapped in a casing of iron and steel some twenty-two inches in thickness, the extent to which official wisdom was mistaken may be realised. The fact was, as Mr. Childers himself aptly said the other day, the guns of twenty years ago were mere popguns in comparison with the monster ordnance of to-day. Guns of five or six tons were the most destructive weapons of offence that could be mustered. Mr. Childers stated that he was scoffed at as being 'absurdly before the times' when only some eight or ten years ago he proposed to arm our navy with thirty-five and thirty-seven ton guns, whereas we are now ready to sweep the seas with ordnance of eighty and one-hundred ton calibre. The difference between John Brown and the Admiralty was, that whilst he was a practical man and a pioneer of progress, 'my lords,' although members of a Liberal Government, were theorists of a very Conservative school. John Brown allowed for advances in artillery, and saw that though only four and a half inches of armour could be pierced by the ordnance of the day, the time would come when fourteen and a half inches would not withstand the shock of an enemy's ball. The fact was, his neighbours, Messrs. Firth & Sons, were, in a sense, bombarding him. Just across the way this firm were casting the guns that were to shatter his plates, and the head of the Atlas had, as it were, the din of battle in his ears.

The result of his negotiations with the Admiralty was that Mr. Brown threw a challenge down to the Government. He offered to roll three plates of five, seven, and eight inches in thickness

respectively. These plates were to be fixed to a certain kind of target, and if they failed to resist the shot that penetrated the four and a half inch armour, he undertook to bear the cost of the tests. As has been shown, Lord Palmerston saw a five and a half inch plate produced; but in order to turn out the thicker armour a new rolling mill had to be laid down. At the opening of this mill in April 1863, the Duke of Somerset and the other lords of the Admiralty were present; and after they had seen its capabilities they returned to London wiser, and probably sadder, men. They witnessed the rolling of plates ranging in thickness, not from four and a half inches to eight only, but to twelve. The twelve-inch slab measured about twenty feet in length; and subsequently a five-inch plate was made, upwards of forty feet long and four feet wide. The success of the day's work was more than complete, and it removed from the official mind the film of prejudice which had previously stood in Mr. Brown's path. The occasion was one of triumph to the men as well as to the master; for it was the pride and boast of the latter that his *employés* felt a common interest with himself in whatever affected the works and their prosperity. There was a cheer as the distinguished party approached to inspect the huge slab of metal, and the host paused to give them a characteristic word of praise: 'We are all proud of your exploits; you are worthy of the name of Englishmen. His Grace the Duke of Somerset wishes me to express his admiration of what you have done.'

In the large dining-room, erected in the suite of offices for the convenience of the staff, a collation was provided, and the Duke

of Somerset proposed the health of the head of the establishment in these terms: 'We are very glad to come here, and I am sure I have profited and been very much interested in what I have seen to-day. Nothing is more interesting to me than seeing these works, and seeing the men of these works; to see the intelligence, the good temper, and the kindly feeling towards the head of the establishment. It has convinced me that the men themselves are well-treated, that they feel they are well-treated, and they showed what great kindness and good judgment must be possessed by the head of the establishment. That is the only way in which you can carry on great works like these we have seen to-day. I cannot, therefore, close the observations I have made without asking you to drink the health of Mr. Brown, coupling it with "Prosperity to the new rolling-mill," for it is a great thing in the proceedings of this day. It is the most striking thing, and will be in the future one of the most wonderful pieces of machinery that have ever been made in this country.'

Punch had a droll account of this auspicious occasion, which is worth referring to in order to show with what admirable satire he hit off the relations of Ministers and manufacturer.

"Now," said Mr. Punch, "let the ceremonial proceed. Somerset, my boy, do you think you understand anything about the process?"

"Well, yes," said the First Lord of the Admiralty, "I think I do. You see, they make it hot, and then—"

"Make what hot? Brandy-and-water? That reminds me that I should like a little, for I am far from well."

"I mean the iron," said the Duke, when Mr. Punch had finished the liquid that was tendered to him as he spoke.

"Well, why didn't you say the iron? didn't you like to speak ironically?"

'It is well that Mr. Brown has built his works strongly, for a shout like that which followed would have brought down any light erection.

"Well," said the Duke, "they take it out of the furnace and roll it between these rollers, and that is all."

"Not quite," said the Mayor, with a quiet look at Mr. Punch; "but his Grace is not altogether an unintelligent observer. Here comes a plate."

'The brawny giants suddenly drew open the door of a vast furnace, and you had an idea that a large piece of blazing fire had got in there by accident, and it was about as possible to look in the face of the fire as of Phœbus. Then, tugged forth by the giants, out came a large slab of red-hot metal, just the thing for a dining-table in Pandemonium, and it was received upon a mighty iron truck, and hurried along to the jaws of the rolling-machine. As it was drawn fiercely into the mill a volcano broke out, and the air was filled with a shower of fire-spangles of the largest construction, and eminently calculated to make holes in your garments. The monster slab was so mercilessly taken in hand by the mighty wheels, and was hurled backwards and forwards, under terrific pressure, and so squeezed and rolled and consolidated that when at length it was flung, exhausted, as it were, upon the iron floor beyond, Mr. Punch was reminded of the way in which he has dealt with, improved, and educated the public mind for the last twenty years.

"And that's the way I propose to defend the British Navy," said the Duke of Somerset, looking as if he had done it all.

"Mr. Mayor," said Mr. Punch, "it makes me thirsty to hear these aristocratic muffs going on in this manner. I hear you have spent 100,000*l.* in this single part of your works in six months, and that you are going to build largely in addition. Sir, I suppose that we, the nation, shall have to pay you a trifle for what you manufacture?"

"Mr. Brown smiled, as if he thought that just possible.

"Sir," continued Mr. Punch, "I rejoice thereat. I don't care what these things cost. I consider them the cheap defence of nations, at least of our nation, which is the only one I care a red cent about. These things will make war as nearly impossible as anything in this mad world can be; and therefore, Mr. Brown, I hope that you will go on making them until further notice."

Alas for the infallibility of our merry and wise monarch! He is older than he was, and would scarcely lay the flattering unction to his soul to-day.

The 100,000*l.* which Mr. Punch mentioned as the outlay entailed by the development of the armour-plate branch of Mr. Brown's business soon fell very short of the actual figures. As soon as he felt that he had solved the problem, and was assured of the support of the Government, he put, practically, no limit upon his judgment. He gave his always enterprising spirit full play, confident that he had struck a vein that would yield a golden harvest. He set about the extension of his premises to some twenty acres, and in this, as in every other detail of his business, he was master of the situation and

the directing mind. He was his own architect. Every building was traced under his immediate instruction. Even the mechanical engineers who supplied him with machinery were called upon to abandon precedent and work to his ideas. When a well-known Glasgow machinist offered his most powerful productions, and challenged the proprietor of the Atlas Works to break them, Mr. Brown simply answered that he must have stronger work, and called for the maker's designs. Upon these he marked the portions where he considered greater strength would be required, and the result was that he was supplied with monster machines, twice as powerful as any before made.

The Sir John Brown of to-day is justifiably proud to recall the fact that his attitude at this period represents him in the light of an Englishman first and a cosmopolitan trader afterwards. As soon as it would permit him he served his country first. For not the first time in the history of English industrial progress foreign Governments first recognised, and were anxious to profit by, the genius of the inventor. Ere the authorities at home were able to make up their minds, pressing orders from other Powers came to Mr. Brown for rolled armour plates, while yet the home Government were dallying with the new departure, but hesitantly declined to execute them without the consent of the Admiralty, with whom he was in tedious negotiation. The Northern States of America, on the verge of deadly conflict with the South, begged him to supply his heavy armour in vain, and autocratic Russia found in the son of the Sheffield slater an autocrat as obdurate and powerful in his way as the Czar himself.

The next important revolution in the trade of which the proprietor of the Atlas Works was the pioneer was a revolution in rails—the change which has now converted the permanent way of almost every railway in the world into paths of steel. This was one result of the Bessemer process, of which, as we have said, Mr. Brown was the first to avail himself. In this case also the foreigner was first in the field in appreciation of improvement; and as there were no reasons of a patriotic nature to influence the manufacturer in stimulating English perception and open-mindedness, Mr. Brown placed no obstacle in the way of the French railway companies who first tendered him support. By and by, when the French, the Italians, and some other Continental peoples had demonstrated the importance of adopting steel instead of iron rails, the English engineers began to wake up to a sense of the progressiveness of human affairs, and to think seriously on the change which others had inaugurated. But even then they thought, like Washington, ‘slowly,’ and not half so surely. They complained of the price of the steel rails as compared with iron, the former being then some 28*l.* per ton against 12*l.* for the latter, to which Mr. Brown replied that if they cost double the amount, they would stand at least six times the amount of wear and tear. Still the English companies held back, and Mr. Brown saw that he could only convince them by practical demonstration. He made them presents of samples of rails, and allowed them to make their own tests. The London, Chatham, and Dover Company laid down at the Victoria Station six steel rails from the Atlas Works and six iron rails from the Ebbw Vale Works at the same

time, with the result that the latter were replated twelve times before the former required renewal. Such overwhelming evidence as this could not be disputed. The demand for steel rails became prodigious, and within a very few years ninety per cent of the main line of the Great Northern Company was relaid with steel. Every year the orders for iron rails grow feebler; and with steel rails at from 5*l.* to 6*l.* per ton we can now appreciate at its due value the foresight which fought against the obliquity of the railway companies.

A host of other branches of the iron trade, which do not call for special notice, were from time to time added to the business of the Atlas Works. These contributed largely to the dimensions of the concern; and long before the period of which we have just spoken Mr. Brown took into partnership Mr. J. D. Ellis and Mr. W. Bragge. Later on the expansion of the business had become such that it was deemed advisable to convert the concern into a limited company, and on February 22, 1864, this project was carried out, the capital subscribed being no less than 1,000,000*l.* The founder of the firm naturally took the post of chairman.

Sir John Brown for some years has ceased to have any interest in the company which trades under his name. It may have been that he found the restraints which the interests and claims of a large body of shareholders necessarily imposed upon him, and of which he had previously been so free, irksome, or perhaps he felt that, having built up name and fortune during an active career of forty years, and received from her Majesty the crowning honour of the edifice, he was entitled to give himself up to the *otium cum dignitate*. Probably the step was

due to a little of both considerations.

In the course of a career so picturesque and remarkable, there must be many incidents of interest to serve to show the secret springs of success, and to give some idea of the grit of the man. 'Neither chance nor fortune' is the English rendering of the motto that adorns Sir John Brown's coat-of-arms, and the words convey with sufficient clearness the principles upon which he worked. These were in brief—honesty, thoroughness, and punctuality in their most rigid form. A striking instance of the value of the last rule occurred in the earlier part of Sir John's career, and gave him the most encouraging practical proof that the virtue was worth cultivating. At the time when the Edinburgh, Perth, and Dundee Railway was about to be opened, he was in the former city, and chanced to call on Mr. Grainger, the engineer of the line. Everything was in readiness, except a few sets of brake springs, which the contractor was unable to supply; and as it seemed impossible to get the articles required in so short a time, it looked as though the ship was going to be spoiled for the want of a pennyworth of tar. Mr. Grainger mentioned the matter to his visitor, and in sheer desperation asked him if he could supply the springs 'by Thursday.' This was on the Saturday, and Mr. Brown replied that, considering the imperfect carrying communication, he feared the time was too short. 'Well,' rejoined Mr. Grainger, 'we must have them.' The visitor considered for a moment, and then said, 'You shall have them.' Away he started forthwith to Berwick, took the train and coach for Newcastle, train forward, and reached Sheffield at eleven P.M. on Sunday. Here he went straight to his fore-

man, told him to have the men there first thing in the morning, and gave positive orders that the springs were to be ready on Monday night. The goods were packed at the appointed time, and away the maker flew with his burden to Manchester for steamer at Fleetwood. Here he had arranged to have a wagon ready to convey the springs to the station from which the mail for the north started. He was in time for the train; but when he presented his consignment, a new difficulty met him in the refusal of the officials to load such goods in the mail. Mr. Brown went straightway to the manager, told him his case, and got a horse-box put on to convey the springs. After a devious journey, and not without many threatening *contretemps* and anxious moments, the traveller reached Glasgow *vid* Ardrossan at five o'clock on the Wednesday afternoon, to the amazement and gratification of the engineer. Mr. Grainger not only compensated the enterprising manufacturer for his outlay and pains, but also introduced his feat to the notice of most of the railway directors present at the opening ceremony, and the gallant effort threw into John Brown's works for a considerable time the bulk of the Scotch trade in railway material.

As in the lexicon of youth there is no such word as 'fail,' so in the well-selected vocabulary which the founder of the Atlas Works chose as his *vade mecum* when he resolved in the flattering ardour of youth to be a 'merchant,' there was no such word as 'impossible.' The proscription of the verbal refuge of the average mortal was not the outcome of a principle peculiar to the subject of this paper. The spirit which underlay it is as old as human aspiration, though a good deal less common. But with

John Brown it was a solemn and severe observance. He was a contemptuous unbeliever in the finality of human power in matters material, and the word jarred. He gloried in the broad truth of the sarcasm of the French *savant*—‘If it is “difficult,” it is done already; if it is “impossible,” it shall be done.’ The servant who entered his presence and maintained that a given task was impossible quitted the room without a situation. The master was relentless on this subject. He could tolerate and sympathise with a fair representation of the difficulty of a proposal, but he exacted from all his *employés* a *bond-fide* co-operation in the mastery of it. And if any man ever had a right to be dogmatic and austere on such a point, surely the bearing became him who, from the doorstep of a slater’s home, successfully stormed the frowning strongholds of fortune, fame, and title.

Qualities like these rallied rather than repelled his workmen. The passing allusion of the Duke of Somerset to the strong bond of union that evidently existed between employer and employed singled out, as if by intuition, the keystone of the great industrial fabric. John Brown was not a counting-house chief, a trading tradition to be approached only through a dozen deputies. He worked new ideas upon old lines. He was old-fashioned and conservative in all that was robust and healthy in English character; receptive and radical in all that gave promise of progress. This union of qualities, this running of new blood into the old veins, was a happy basis for the welfare of the Atlas Works. The master was a living and visible head, knowing every man in the yard, and known and approachable to all. The result was mutual respect; and on

occasion, as the sterling character of the master asserted itself in high relief, that respect deepened on the one side into actual reverence. Such an occasion arose when, soon after the firm had gone into the iron trade, a vast building, 365 feet in length, was being added to the covered portion of the premises. The undertaking was an expensive one, and not the least important feature of it was the time occupied in construction. One Sunday morning, shortly after the roof had been put on and the building finished, a man, pale and breathless, darted into the old parish Church of Sheffield, and inquired for Mr. John Brown.

‘What is the matter?’ asked the latter, when he had passed out of the door, and saw one of his own workmen before him, with big tears standing in his eyes.

‘It’s all down, sir!’ gasped the man.

‘What is down?’ rejoined the master.

‘The roof of the building is blown down!’ returned the messenger.

‘All down?’

‘All, sir.’

‘Then go to Harvey at once, and tell him to prepare to put it up again,’ said Mr. Brown; and, pocketing the loss of the thousand pounds involved without a word of regret, to the amazement of the man he turned and went back into the church to hear the sermon.

Work at the Atlas Works was always well done, and the old spirit of thoroughness lingers with them yet. Their founder would never allow doubtful workmanship to go off the premises. Doubtful workmen went off instead. This policy has been the sole talisman of those great Sheffield houses whose names are, like Scrooge’s, ‘good on ‘Change’ all

the world over—the Rodgers, the Jessops, the Firths, the Wostenholms, and others. In his retirement, Sir John is as unbending as ever in his insistence on good and honest work. Every piece of joinery used in the construction of his noble mansion at Endcliffe was made and put together in the rough twelve months before it was required, and every stone and ornament bear an impress that would equally surprise and delight Mr. Ruskin—‘Truth.’ To this golden rule is to be attributed in a very great degree the fact with which Sir John closes his self-revelation: ‘My works always pushed *me*. I could never make them large enough.’

Such is an outline of the industrial history of Sir John Brown. His social career is outside the province of this article; but it may be said to have been in keeping with his splendid success as an inventor and a manufacturer. When he turned his back upon the industrial hive which he had established, he recognised the truism that

‘Absence of occupation is not rest;
A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.’

He was never so completely immersed in his own affairs as to forget the duties of citizenship. He had gone through the best municipal training when his fellow-townsmen laid tribute upon his dignified leisure as the knight of Endcliffe Hall, and made him chairman of the first School Board in Sheffield. As town councillor, alderman, mayor twice, Master Cutler twice, magistrate, town trustee, Church burgess, and Deputy-Lieutenant of the West Riding, Sir John Brown has served his native town without stint, and always with honour, wisdom, and success. Recently his bust has been placed in the board-room of the

School Board in commemoration of his services to that body. Advancing years and domestic anxieties, necessitating travel, have of late years deprived Sheffield of his counsel and the advantage of his administrative powers, and have now thrown beyond realisation the hope at one time entertained, that he would represent the town in Parliament. As a magistrate and Chairman of Ecclesall Board of Guardians Sir John is still, indeed, linked to public life; but the heavy blow which so long threatened has recently fallen. The death of Lady Brown was not a purely private calamity. Her quick sympathies and silent charity rendered her better known among the poor than in society, and the suspension of her kindly enterprises has left a gap in many humble homes and hearts.

A brief allusion must be made to the chief of Sir John’s public benefactions—the handsome church that, standing upon a high shoulder of ground, looks down upon the ‘black country’ which the donor did so much to colonise. The rapid development of the district drew attention to the dearth of religious accommodation, and one of the first to recognise the necessities of the case was the proprietor of the Atlas Works. He found 20,000 people without the means of attending a place of worship. The church which formerly covered the district was situated a considerable distance away, and would only seat 500 persons. A commission was appointed to mark out an ecclesiastical district embracing 10,000 souls. Before the scheme had been carried into effect, however, the Church Extension Society was formed, and Mr. Brown at once offered to subscribe 5000*l.*; but finding this likely to result in the construction of an edifice in-

adequate and unsatisfactory, he decided to erect the church entirely at his own cost. The offer was accepted, and the corner stone was laid on May 19th, 1866, by the Archbishop of York. The edifice was ready some twelve months before it was opened for public service, owing to an unfortunate dispute with the vicar of a neighbouring church on the subject of the right of patronage. On Feb. 5th, 1869, however, the church, which was dedicated to 'All Saints,' was opened by the Archbishop, who, in referring to the noble gift of Sir John Brown, said: 'I feel persuaded from many conversations, and therefore from what I know, that the feeling uppermost in his mind was not to raise a grand temple, which, seen from afar by men, would be an ornament to the town, and a monument to his own liberality. I feel sure it was his great anxiety to labour to do what he could towards the saving of the souls of those who work for him.' The total cost of the edifice was some 11,500*l.*, and to this sum Sir John subsequently added 700*l.* for a peal of bells. Few who have had experience of the donor's sterling character will doubt the truth of what Dr. Thomson said in the foregoing tribute; but what Sir John would have shrunk from doing the grateful Sheffield folk have had no compunction in doing for him. As Pope says:

'Who builds a church to God, and not to
fame,
Will never mark the marble with his
name.'

But if a stranger asked to be directed to All Saints' Church, the probability is that he would be told Sheffield possessed no such edifice. 'John Brown's Church' is a landmark from which distances are measured and localities fixed. It is the pivot upon which

the topographical world of that half of the town revolves.

In indicating, faintly enough, the qualities that have sustained Sir John Brown in his extraordinary career, the assistance of his contemporaries and of impartial observers must be invoked. The testimony of these is in singular agreement. In the words of one honoured citizen of Sheffield, he 'always seemed to see a little ahead of everybody else.' He was essentially a pioneer, with the daring, the coolness, and the pertinacity that go to make pioneering work successful. He broke new ground, but he was gifted with a rare power of appraisement which enabled him to decide accurately whether the new ground was worth the breaking. He was quicker in his perception of the advantages of new ideas than some rivals who prided themselves upon being less chained to old-fashioned notions than Sir John Brown. But, as has been pointed out, his was a moral rather than material conservatism. He stuck to the living forces of the mind and heart, and would embrace no new-fangled idea that compromised the solid virtues of English character. Thus he welded old and new, and found in the combination the secret of true progress. A very prince of progress in this form, he often made it his business to take time by the forelock, and grease the wheels of the van of civilisation. There is one final example of conservatism in Sir John Brown which all will admire, and which illustrates, in a peculiarly touching way, the simplicity of his tastes and the goodness of his heart. 'I have often felt,' said he to the writer, 'that I should like to spend the last five years of my life exactly as I spent my time fifty years ago—with the same home, the same friends, the same haunts.'

UNWIDOWED.

THEY ask me, Shall I love again !
Alas, they little know my heart !
For twenty graves would yawn in vain
That woman from my life to part.

They see her now no more, I know ;
But still with me she smiles and talks ;
And where the flowers she cherished blow,
Beside me still at eve she walks.

I loved her once, and won her love
(Green days, and yet in memory green) ;
And now she is my wife above—
Above, and here, by men unseen.

My wife—although the form I loved
In death's gray mist is coldly furled ;
My wife—however far removed,
The sweetest woman in the world.

What, then, is left with me to give,
Since I am hers, and hers alone ?
Dear wife, around me love and live,
My angel, and not less my own !

Thou know'st that tale we read of yore—
The hound that on his master's grave
Pitched camp till death ; and thou much more
Wilt camp around my mortal cave.

Yet am I selfish. Are there joys
Thou must forego to wait with me,
And only hear the golden noise
Far off, and only far off see ?

O, I were jealous of sweet heaven,
Did I not know how, from thy youth,
Thy only joys were those whose leaven
Is love and sacrifice and truth.

So, from the freer life above
My dungeon, kiss me through the bars ;
Thou art my bride, thou art my love,
This side or that side of the stars !

WADE ROBINSON.

SOME WESTERN EXPERIENCES.

WE dropped down—perilously far down it seemed to me—from the last step of our carriage plump in virgin mud, full an eighth of a mile from the nearest building. That nearest building was a long low shed, ostentatiously yellow with piney youth, perched upon crutches or stilts, and ascended, like the Capitoline Hill, by means of an immense inclined plane ridged with supports for the feet. It was piled high with stuffed grain sacks, as could be seen through its wide open door, and was spoken of with conscious pride by the villagers as ‘our noo *deepo*.’

A few villagers were gathered about the train, its daily arrival being the diurnal and never waning sensation of the hamlet. The most of them, hands in pockets, were idly looking on, while one caught the slim mail bag, throwing another into the car in its stead; one exchanged packages with the elegantly moustached, bediamonded, and jaunty express messenger; one or two others climbed into the train which would carry them to their mighty metropolis of twenty thousand souls some fifty miles away.

To my indignant disappointment not one of these villagers was extravagant in hat-brim or boot-leg. Not one of them was red-belted or pistol-environed. Neither fringe, feathers, nor buckskin loomed upon my expectant vision. I smarted under a sense of wrong that picturesque fancy was not cajoled even with rainbow-hued or blood-

red flannel, and that every man wore a shirt more or less white, and ‘store clothes’ in which could be traced generic likenesses to the masculine raiment of that effete civilisation which had just cast me out.

Had we indeed come so far, braved danger on heaving water and death on shuddering rail, only to find the Joaquin Millerised westerner on his native prairie but a sallow and looser-jointed Yankee than those we had left by the far eastern sea?

‘I’ll wager that they have literary conversaciones and sketch from Nature,’ growled S.

‘There’s plenty of clay modelling about their legs,’ I sniffed, nose in air, and determined not to be propitiated that cowhide, thick with mud, replaced the romantic leggings I had set my heart upon.

The station was evidently in a depression between two undulations of the prairie. From where we stood, a miry road, with fat alluvial soil, strong in potentiality of opulent harvests, although now ploughed only by hoofs and wheels, stretched before and behind us up two long gentle slopes, over the tops of which the road disappeared. In the whole length of the road before and behind us only two pedestrians (saving dogs, pigs, hens, and such small deer) were to be seen, picking slow way across that sticky chasm. One wagon—a long unpainted box affair without springs—stood in front of a small building half-way up the rise or ‘prairie roll’ before us. Before one or two doors,

presumably of 'stores' from the flannel shirts, over-alls, and festoons of gingham and muslin hanging before them, two or three stalwart westerners were tilted back in chairs. A sun-bonnet or two was wavering back and forth in gardens. An open space, dusky and lurid as mouth of Plutonian cavern, with silhouette demon hammering before dancing flames, was two-thirds up the road, and these were all the signs of life we saw beyond the little group at the deepo.

The village consisted of this one long street; the houses and shops, or 'stores,' ranged along it with the regularity of figures in the Parthenaic frieze. Scarcely a tree was to be seen, not a hedge or shrub, not a blooming flower or swelling bud, not a single decorative branch or vine, in a land where Nature responds so readily to the idlest asking, that vines and plants grow, like Jonah's gourd, almost in a night.

The dwellings were usually enclosed by two rows of boards nailed to an occasional post, to which the bark still adhered.

Each side of the miry road was a narrow border, a sort of Pompeian arrangement of gold against black, just wide enough for two persons to walk abreast. This Pompeian decoration was scarcely regarded by the villagers as having decorative value or æsthetic significance. To them it was, instead, cap-sheaf and keystone of the village's sumptuous civilisation—its new side-walk.

The houses, mostly unpainted, stood somewhat widely apart, and were built after the Italianised Gothic of certain Tuscan cathedrals. That is, each had a frontispiece magnificently out of proportion to the edifice behind it, pyramidal façades, lacking cusped niche, imaged bracket, sculptured

cornice, and saint-crowned apex to be equally impressive, yet giving as vital impression of *aspiration* as ever spiritualised Gothic lines, even if of aspiration not spiritual, but mundane. There were no porticoes, porches, piazzas, not a flying gable or round arch—nothing but Doric simplicity of ten-foot rears, fronted with Tuscan façades at least twenty feet high.

We walked up the Pompeian decoration, through the cracks of which ribbon-grass grew and fluttered. Half-way up a woman stood aside to let us pass, in a bright red sun-bonnet stiffened with pasteboard, and long calico train stiffened with mud.

'Marm,' she said, 'who be you a-lookun fer? I ken put you stre:' (straight).

We were looking for the 'hotel' two steps away. Westepped directly from the side-walk into a narrow entry, hung with straw hats, bits of harness, slimpsey linen garments that somehow reminded one of drowned corpses of masculine raiment, to find ourselves in the parlour. It was a lead-coloured room newly painted. A rag carpet covered the floor, and a profusion of braided mats covered the carpet. The sofa was hair-cloth, the chairs of cane; cotton curtains at the windows were edged with coarse hand-knit trimming. George Washington in frame of pop-corn and family ambrotypes in one of wood hung over a decoration of pine. This decoration was supported on turned brackets, and was called a chimney or mantelpiece, although not a chimney was in the hamlet. Such are sometimes the feeble forms in which majestic ideas expire; the glorious gods of old Greece dying in agonies of grotesqueness as Christian saints on Lombardic sarcophagi, the monumental chimneypiece of the Renaissance

expiring on western prairies as a strip of painted pine.

The sheet-iron stove stood in the centre of the room upon a zinc-covered dais, its pipes soaring away through ceilings and upper chambers out through the roof. Harps and cornucopias of varnished acorns and leather leaves decorated the walls, and the room in its *ensemble* was the most elegant within fifty miles.

The manner of our life at the inn did not lack novelty. My little room was the prophet's or prince's chamber, according to the character of the guest. Its one window looked over a collection of pig-pens, an expanse of ploughed ground, then a monotony of green billows rising behind one another, so near the sky that I was shut away as by solid wall of emerald from the marvellous sunsets that had been one of the promised delights of my western life.

But although Nature's splendours were shut away from me, I had those of art. My imposing-looking bed, which ignominiously 'caved' upon the slightest excuse, was covered with one of those triumphs of human genius called 'album quilts.' Every white square was inscribed in marking-ink with an appropriate sentiment and the name of the donor. The one which oftenest greeted my waking eyes moved my soul with stately cadences.

'When th's you see,
Remember me;
For as this I do
I think of you.
MOLLIE SANDERS.'

The first day of the second week, going to my room after breakfast, I was startled to find my pillows, erst clad in white, dressed in chocolate print, exactly like the dress in which Sis had waited upon table. I found later that in full half those cathedral-

façaded houses the 'fore-room' was *salle-à-manger*, *chambre-à-coucher*, and *salon* in one; and the bed was always dressed, save on such ceremonious occasions as sewing-bee or tea party, in the darkest and most serviceable prints that could be found.

I could exist with pig-pens usurping the place of sunsets, but with coloured pillow-slips—perish the thought! I dived among my own effects, and soon those pillows suggested the thinnest of handspikes in the white raiment of the most opulently contoured of pursers.

'Sis' was sixteen, freckled, with white eyelashes, a long calico train, and red 'waterfall,' second only to Niagara. She was daughter of the innkeeper, with lark's voice and motion, and was 'hail fellow well met' with the boarders, whom she bullied and quizzed. Woe to the luckless wight who tried to bandy witticisms with her! More than once have I seen the head of some such foolish one unwilling pedestal, and with expression of mediæval gargoyle, for the immense platter from which Sis served the *pièce de résistance* of the meal, the miserable gargoyle not daring even to wink lest floods of gravy descend upon it. It was Sis who always rang the dinner-bell, standing in the middle of the road before the house, and swinging the boisterous thing till its brazen voice echoed far out over the billowy prairie. Then from bench and forge, from office and counter, from gossiping coterie at the post-office (which was also drapery, mercery, stationer's, chemist's, grocery, and falience establishment all in one), from washing-bench at the back-door, where tin basin and crash roller were free to every comer, from garden, prairie, and 'noo deepo' rushed the bachelor boarders, who

met three times a day around that neatly-served table. They took their repast invariably in linen coats, said coats always remaining between meals suspended from nails in the front entry. So obtuse had my perceptions become amid the rotten civilisation of cities that I failed to discover a compliment to myself in this uniformity of linen, till, after leaving the inn for our own house, I chanced one day to peep into the dining-room where twelve celibates sat at meat *with not a coat among them*.

One noon the dinner-bell was laggingly answered by blacksmith, carpenter, dapper young clerk, and district judge from the metropolis.

'Now jest look ahere, you uns!' exclaimed Sis indignantly; 'ef you've done gone, shut yer cabbage-heads onter the notion that I'll stand sech conducts as these, you're jest sucked in. You, Jedge Brown, you'll jest have to eat your pork done gone cold.'

The boyish 'Judge' laughed, and answered Sis somewhat after the same republican simplicity of manner.

That same afternoon, fleeing my shutterless western window, I was reading in the dining-room. I was surprised to see Sis lay the table for six o'clock supper, while yet the sun was so high, and still more surprised when I heard the bell making frenzied uproar in the street. I obeyed eloquent convulsion of white eyelashes, and remained in my seat by the window, when judge, carpenter, and others came rushing in, chorus-ing with wonder that the afternoon had seemed so short. The hands of the clock told six.

'Laws!' exclaimed Sis, glancing up at it. 'Reckon I mought as well turn that there clock's snoot back agin, now I'm done gone

sure you uns won't be late for supper.'

And she turned it back, just the sixty minutes that must elapse before those deluded souls could eat.

Strangers were not unknown in our inn. One day a dashing individual, perfumed and jewelled, addressed me at the dinner-table:

'Marm, I calculate that that there's a *real* diamond in your ring.'

S. was not there to answer for me, so I was obliged to calculate that 'that there' was no sham.

'Would you like to swop it, marm, for dry goods, millinery, pins, needles, embroidery, gaiter boots, Cologne water, hair-oil, face-powder, pills?'

Another day a voice addressed me from vague regions remote:

'Marm, jest tell yer ole man that them air harness need a right smart o' grease.'

My 'ole man,' aged twenty-four, was again absent, but intuition told me that the speaker was he who had borrowed his sulkey and belongings a few hours before.

Once I failed to appear at table during several meals. When I came down at last to supper (in a print peignoir) ample proof awaited me that slimpsey linen can cover gentle hearts. Almost every one of my fellow boarders had greeted my reappearance with some little token of kindness—a saucer of rare berries, a pile of early green corn, two blooming plants in pots from the metropolis, a lovely new kitten in a brand new tin basin, kitten and basin presented by my nearest neighbour at table, the village tinker. As each boarder finished his swift repast he widened his passage door-wards so as to include my chair, and said kindly, with deference evidently paid to

my sex and not to any difference of social position, 'How'd'y (*Anglicè*, how do you do?), marm? Hope you're done gone shet o' that there misery in your side.'

But it came to pass that we wearied of our inn. We had eaten so many chickens fried in pork fat and soured with cream, that we shuddered at every cock-crow. We were exhausted with struggles that our bread be cold at least once a day, and that our lettuce be not always dressed with ham gravy. We yearned for coffee unmixed with scorched barley, and for other than the dampest of brown sugar in our tea. So, when a cot of three rooms, shutterless, cellarless, chimneyless, porchless, treeless, vineless, and well-less, but with soaring Gothico-Italian façade, was offered us for 12*l.* a year, we gladly removed thither. The proprietor added a kitchen, into which one dived down from the main house by means of an immense step; and then, pointing out the town well to the braceleted and ear-ringed maid in calico train and bare feet, who had agreed to serve us for a dollar a week, left us to make or mar our domestic peace as we would. Fortunately we had brought with us various modest elegancies in the way of muslin curtains and pretty table-covers. We bought the cheapest of pine furniture, and I covered as much of it as I could in soft draperies. One of our boxes also held a cheap carpet, large enough to cover all our floors; but whose ingrain glory I am afraid set in neighbouring hearts thrifty shoots of the plant which Casimo de Medici said no man should water. Then we unpacked our books, hung our few pictures, and made believe to be exuberantly happy. Nevertheless there *were* drawbacks to that ex-

uberance, even although in a month after taking possession I had adorned our Tuscan-Gothic façade with a Renaissance portico of pine scantling and wire, covered thickly with wild cucumber and morning glory vines, under which I could sit in the gloaming and forget my chagrin that heaving billows of emerald shut me away from the walls of rose-tinted pearl, the jewelled domes and sparkling spires of a still more western city than ours, in the vigour with which I must defend myself against the mosquitoes. Even though tremulous veils of feathery cypress, and swinging bells of morning glory screened our windows, and the little plot of ground before the front door flamed with honest verbenas, grown valiantly from a single bouquet, though oyster-cans hung from every *coigne d'avantage*, looking like sculptured globes of malachite, with lustrous thick leaves of pendent vines, and though weird, dreamlike music wavered through our rooms with every breath of hot air passing over the æolian harp which I had fastened in one of the windows, there were yet drawbacks besides the worms that devoured our melons and the mosquitoes that devoured us.

One burning midnight every door in the village yawned widely open as usual to entice some possible breath of air to enter. The slaps, bangs, and angry murmurs of the customary warfare had for some time been hushed in our cot, and the field was left clear for our trumpetting foes to glut their bloodthirst upon our exhausted frames. Suddenly, with a shuddering sense of something horrible in the air, I started broad awake. I had heard nothing, seen nothing, felt nothing, yet I was numb with terror. It was

one of those swift spiritual awakenings in which the soul seems to outrun the body in the race towards consciousness, and to be quivering with keen vivid sensation while yet the body is arousing its senses one by one. Whether such awakening is beneath the warning sweep of guardian angel pinion, or from cry of some consciousness left watching while the soul sleeps, let wiser than I say. I only know that I was awake, cold and trembling in the grasp of an unrecognisable horror, some minutes before I was conscious of the outer world. Then I heard a sound, another, and another, each more awful than the last. They were sighs, long, deep, agonised sighs, like dying ones, broken by inarticulate moans, and came from directly under my bed.

My first thought was that S. was dying. But no, from the adjoining room I could hear his calm unconscious breathing. Even as I listened the dreadful moans continued, and I was too paralysed to raise my voice. But—there came a sudden convulsion beneath me that shook my bed, a heavy sound as if some large body struggled and gasped in death. I shrieked—wildly, agonisedly—and in an instant S. was beside me. It was not necessary to explain my cries, for he could hear the sounds as well as I. He stooped and looked under the bed. Then with sudden exclamation he reached under. Another moment and the night air was thrust through and through with wild unearthly clamour, as S. flew frantically across the house in pursuit of the squealing porker, who had broken down our fence in pursuit of a night's lodging.

One torrid afternoon I was sitting upon the floor of our 'fore-room,' packing away the week's table-linen in the seat of the

chintz-covered barrel, which was at once linen-press and armchair. From my position I could see nothing out of doors but a vivid crimson spot just beyond my vine-covered portico, where my adored verbenas waxed strong and blood-hued in the dazzling sunshine. The house was perfectly still, for Amanda had gone for water, and the day itself was as undisturbed in its molten glare as if I were the only living soul in all the broad universe. Not even a dreamlike breath of music came from my æolian harp, and only the soulless locusts whirled their melancholy and eternal wh-r-r-r-r in the heavy-headed prairie-grass. My thoughts were far away in a better land, although an earthly one, and my eyes were dim with tears as I saw the name by which I had once been known, but by which I should be known again never more.

Suddenly, right in the heart of this great, hot, sad silence, I became conscious that all the malachite globes of my oyster-cans were awaying violently to and fro. I could hear the dishes rattling in the china closet (a packing-box on end curtained with muslin) and could feel the floor beneath me heaving like the billows of an angry sea.

'Heavens!' I cried, springing to my feet. 'Have I left home and friends to die like this in a western earthquake?'

The rocking increased, till now our cot seemed almost lifted from the earth and poised upon the brink of an abyss mercifully hidden from my shuddering sight. Just as my terror was at its height, I heard Amanda's voice in fluent yells at the gate. An instant more and the earthquake drifted away in confused uproar out upon the prairie.

'Twan't nothin' but Briggses

hogs, marm, a-scrapin' ther dod-rotted hides agin the underpin-nin'!" screamed Amanda reassuringly in at the door.

Our diet in that prairie village was naturally limited. Fish was, of course, unknown, but chickens figured with satiating frequency upon our table. Everything that could be made with milk, eggs, and sugar was at our command, and we had such vegetables and small fruits as the worms, insects, and chickens left us, which was not much. 'Side-meat,' i.e. fat pork preserved in brine, was the staple viand, one so unacceptable to us that a 'killing day' was a red letter one in our calendar. On such a day I would see unusual commotion up the hill beyond our 'noo deespo.' Our fellow citizens would be rushing excitedly about, each with a lump in his hand, which my practised sight recognised as just-killed veal, occasionally beef, never mutton. In that cellarless iceless hamlet, where the heat-shimmers wimping over the prairie made one seasick, and the mercury freely distorted itself up to 100 in the shade, meat must be consumed at once, or not at all. The frolicsome calf of the dawn, therefore, was often the veal of a score of families at noon, although *we* always managed to preserve ours, by a preliminary cooking, until night. On such rare days I made a sort of fête. I brought out my finest napery and laid the table myself with such small luxury as I had in the way of silver and china. I even despoiled my adored verbena bed, and robbed the cypress vines of some of their burning stars, sending Amanda out upon the prairie to select the most graceful grasses to mix with them, much to that demoiselle's surprise, her first impression being that we wreathed ourselves with them

and sang a sort of Io-Baccio chorus during our unwonted feast. Then when all was done, the vegetables ready to be 'dished,' the roast crisping in the oven, the custards luke-warming in a basin of tepid water, and S. looked for each moment, Amanda and I would arm ourselves with towels and rage about the 'fore-room' like maniacs escaped from their cage, slapping, banging, till murdered flies lay about us in piles, and the atmosphere was as clear as that of insect-breeding prairies can ever hope to be. Then S. would come in with ever fresh delight at my little banquet, and we would dine, forgetting for a tiny season that 'drawbacks' existed.

One day this programme had been carried out almost to completion. The raging of two maniacs had been performed to the satisfaction of the actresses and the annihilation of most of the audience. I heard S.'s step at the gate. Just then, fancying a peculiar and significant odour from the kitchen, I rushed out to discover the cause. S., too, upon entering, noticed the odour of a few drops of spilled gravy, and dived directly down into the kitchen after me. I opened the oven door and gracefully invited him to 'sniff.' He sniffed once, twice; then sniffed no more! Chaos was let loose in the banquet-hall. Thence came the sound of heavy pounding, then a crash. It sounded as if all the china in the universe, as if the Celestial Empire, the flowery kingdom itself, tottered to its fall, and fell. Into chaos we rushed, to see my pretty fête dissolved like the baseless fabric of a dream, and my best table-cloth disappearing into the horizon like white sail upon trackless sea. 'Ingersoll's colt!' was our rueful trio.

MARGARET BERTHA WRIGHT.

THE 'SUBLIME' TURK.

At one of those celebrated Saturday evening receptions at Cambridge House, Piccadilly, when Lord Palmerston—that real patriot and upholder of the Englishman's rights—was Prime Minister, a well-known diplomatist, discussing the character of the Turks, remarked to his lordship that nothing practical and solid could be got out of them. They were as polite as Talleyrand, clever as Metternich, and as conciliatory as Sir Hamilton Seymour, but still always seemed to promise what they never intended to perform, postponing the decision of any matter with the everlasting 'Bukra'—to-morrow. 'Well,' replied Lord Palmerston, laughing, 'what can you expect from people who have no heels to their shoes?'

Although the Turks are ruling in Europe, it is mighty difficult to believe that they belong to the same continent as the Englishman, Frenchman, or Russian. When we salute and raise our hats, they touch their heart, lips, and forehead. While we give our overcoats to the hall-porter, they are taking off their shoes. We do our quill-driving at our desks: they sit cross-legged and write on their laps with a reed shaped as a pen, but—bless you!—without a slit; and instead of moving the hand as any other ordinary mortal, the Oriental shifts his paper in the course of his caligraphy! He objects, too, to signing his name, and prefers rather to attach his seal; perhaps in this he is right, as he will avoid then the many temptations to 'do' a little bill.

No one can read the *Arabian Nights* without being charmed with its romances. They have ever had a great fascination, especially for the young. There is a mystery and a spell of enchantment about them. The mouth waters at the luxurious description of fountains in cool courts, soft music, and purses of gold thrown recklessly about like seeds in a garden. And then are we not thrilled by the decided manner in which the Padishah signals for heads to be cut off, or the Ferashes called in to do their little business of bastinado, to say nothing of numberless sacks with their victims floating about in the blue waters of the Bosphorus?

We, living here on the banks of the Thames, in the centre of civilisation, within sound of Big Ben of Westminster, are little inclined to credit the stories of the fatal effects of a cup of coffee, the bastinado, slavery, and physical torture. These things are, however, all in full swing. The ordinary tourist in the East knows next to nothing of its customs. It is only the resident of many years who can speak with confidence of something more than the mere surface of Oriental life. The truth is that much goes on within the walls of a harem or palace which is terribly secret and mysterious. Yes, mystery and secrecy. These two words are the pivots upon which everything is worked; and the capital, Constantinople, to its shame, knows as much as any other city in the East about such matters. Barring decapitation, most of the enormi-

ties are now committed just as they were a hundred years ago.

When Sultan Abdul Medjid, brother of Abdul Aziz, came to the throne, the amiable monster (who, by the bye, drank six bottles of champagne daily, the last bottle being drugged) had his five brothers bowstrung before his eyes. It was dangerous to have so many male heirs to the succession: they might become inconvenient members of the dynasty, and so it was better to crush at once all chances of a conspiracy against the throne. Only quite lately the succession law was repealed, which required the destruction of every male child of the Sultan's sisters and daughters. What a sad and touching story was that of the 'two little tombs with two little red fezzes' described by Thackeray in visiting the Mausoleum; these were the tombs of Abdul Medjid's nephews, the children of his sister, who were slain with the bowstring. Sultan Mahmoud strangled the one, but having sympathy for the agony of the poor mother, his daughter, the royal heart relented. He then promised that in the event of her having another male child, it should be allowed to live. Mahmoud died, and Abdul Medjid succeeded. His sister bore another son, and, depending on her royal brother's affection for her, hoped that this infant would be spared. What happened? He tore the infant from its mother's bosom and killed it. The poor woman's heart broke, and on her death-bed she sent for her heartless brother and cursed him as a perjurer and assassin. She lies now by the 'two little fezzes.' This story brings us to the Suleimanie mausoleum. There you can see the tombs of the seventeen brothers whom Sultan Mahomet III. strangled in a fit of

jealousy; but this little event certainly occurred some time ago, and in barbarous times. Ah, barbarous times, indeed! The Oriental code of punishments is a trifle more civilised than of yore. They do not now thrust people into ovens filled with spikes and knives, and heat them gradually, nor do they hang up their mothers by the heels to make them confess where the money is concealed.

Of all Eastern customs and habits, how little is known of the inner life of the Sultan, of his ways of living, of the harems as owned by the rich pashas, and of the dominant influence of Prince Backsheesh.

'Behind the lofty garden-wall,
Where stranger face can ne'er sur-
prise—
That inner world her all-in-all—
The Eastern woman lives and dies.'

Owing to the nature of the institution our knowledge of harem life is entirely derived from the visits of European ladies. The Turkish authorities, it must be confessed, are very amiable in this respect, and little difficulty is experienced when the introductions are good. The Turk is commonly believed to be a sort of Bluebeard. It is not so. Polygamy is not the rule, but the exception. The lower classes never have more than one wife; and it is only in the case of wealthy pashas that there are three or four wives, the latter number being legally allowed to every Mussulman according to the Koran; this is exclusive of almost any number of slaves and concubines. The husband must have no acquaintance, however slight, with women other than those of his own harem; and should he observe slippers outside of the harem door, he knows that ladies are visiting, and therefore cannot enter his own house. Then, again,

if perchance he strolls through the bazaar, there must be no recognition of any of his own women, although they may be throwing away his money right and left in a most lavish way on silks and jewels. He must not say a word, and so strokes his beard and passes on with an 'In-shallah' (Please God), or 'Allah Kerim' (God is great and merciful); for now he knows only too well how the money goes! European ladies are the objects of much attention and curiosity on the part of the women of a harem. Their dresses are felt, they are pawed all over, and asked childish questions incessantly; for it must be remembered that a large harem consists of wives and domestic slaves, the latter counted by hundreds.

A young English lady, seventeen years old, of great personal attractions and engaging manners, some time back visited a harem accompanied by her mother and friends. The women questioned her, and would not believe that she had 'no children, or even a husband.' One of the wives, who took a great fancy to her, threw her arms round her neck, and entreated her to stay with them for ever. She could have any husband she liked, and even was so kind as to especially recommend *her own*, adding that she was sure he would soon want another wife, and that she, the real wife, would much rather it was this nice English girl, as then there would always be the pleasure of having her as a friend and companion. Here was a most decided offer. A firm refusal, however, of these honours caused much surprise and disappointment.

Turkish ladies are very illiterate, and in very few cases are able to read even a French novel. They live a very quiet and happy

life on the whole; much of their time being taken up with visits, excursions to the Sweet Waters, and dressing. It is asked, 'Well, what about marriage; there must be weddings, wives, and families?' True; but, as in other things, they have their own peculiar mode. The process of courtship is unknown among them. The matrimonial negotiation is carried on by a woman of mature age, or by the mothers on both sides, who arrange a marriage by visiting some desirable young lady at the baths. They chat and expatiate on the good looks and accomplishments of the young man proposed, and all is done. The *fiancé* never sees his wife until she lifts her veil in the bridal apartments. The lady is often more fortunate, as she takes care to have a look at the gentleman through the small apertures of the latticed window, or in some other manner, when he least expects it. The Turkish ladies are fond of giving entertainments, especially a cake party, called 'chalva.' On arrival at the hostess's quarters, escorted by slaves and eunuchs, they salute each other gracefully by touching lips and forehead. They will then gossip quietly, and compare notes as to their dresses, jewels, &c.; and if the harem be a distinguished one, dancing girls are hired to perform with castanets and tambourines, and thus time is whiled away. The signal for the 'order of going' is given by clapping of hands and ordering in the 'chalva,' which is rich and luscious, something like our trifle cake. At some of our dull and dreary entertainments in Belgravia and Tyburnia, we might well take a hint from this Eastern lady, especially as she invariably bids adieu to her friends with the remark, 'I am so glad

it's all over,' not intending to be rude, but simply congratulating herself that the little party has gone off to her entire satisfaction. Rumour has it that the harem walls conceal terrible secrets; that trap-doors communicate with the blue Bosphorus; and that mysterious proceedings go on under cover of darkness.

The eunuch is a great personage in the harem or palace. His power is almost absolute. There is no limit to his control. The chief eunuch in a palace is styled *Kislar Agaci*; he is black, and takes the position of the second man of the Empire, ranking with the Grand Vizier. He is captain of the girls. If they are insubordinate he does not mince matters, but chastises them with rods on the bare body. Should the matter, however, be a very serious one, they are *disposed of*! These black eunuchs are hideous ungainly fellows, generally with short necks and long legs; they are very haughty and overbearing in their demeanour, and when escorting their charges on excursions slash about with their 'coubatch' or whip indiscriminately, to clear the way for the pets of the *Padishah*. They enjoy princely salaries; and the large fortunes amassed by them result mainly from backsheesh screwed out of the inmates of the harem. It is from this class of Orientals that the mutes are selected. Mutes are still employed by the Sultan in his palaces as guards and attendants; and especially are their negative services availed of at the 'Porte,' where all official business and diplomatic interviews are carried on. The mutes (we are not talking of the *Arabian Nights* and their fanciful stories, but in sober earnest as to what is happening at the present hour) are selected from the eunuchs, and when very

young have *their tongues cut out*, and every means devised to keep them in a state of ignorance, as they are not even taught to read and write. The eunuchs are also turned to further account. When a Grand Vizier is to be deposed, or some other person in high office to be dismissed, such matters are generally carried through with expedition. The officer whose duty it is to undertake this important mission is termed 'Black Ears.' It is for him only to notify the Grand Vizier that his power is at an end; he appears suddenly, always at midnight, and without any kind of warning. He receives for this errand an enormous amount of backsheesh. In former days it was his privilege and duty to strangle then and there the Grand Vizier or high functionary, whoever he might be. But things are more mercifully managed now, and the victim is smuggled on board the Sultan's steam-yacht, the *Izzedin*, to some distant point in Arabia or Asia Minor, and most probably the Ministerial career is terminated by the simple process of administering a cup of 'mocha.'

The Sultan never marries. The mothers of his children are styled *Sultanas*, and have separate establishments; but as they have been slaves they are not permitted to sit at table with their own children, although these very children are princes and princesses. His Majesty *Abdul Hamid* has only four children, and all by one wife; but even she dares not sit down in presence of the Sultan's mother, but must stand before her deferentially. The mother of a reigning Sultan—the Queen-Mother or *Sultana Valideh*, as she is called—is the first lady in the empire, and always treated with great

ceremony. She has unlimited influence. Her position is unique, and her power in the affairs of the State is as great as that of the Grand Vizier himself; often, indeed, the appointment of the latter is to be attributed to her intrigue and *finesse*. The Sultana Valideh is at the bottom of every scheme, and dominates her sovereign son to such an extent that every pasha courts her favour. A great scandal and an amusing scene took place when the Empress Eugénie visited Constantinople a few years back. Being anxious to recognise all the kindnesses and attention paid to her, her Majesty at a farewell interview actually kissed the Valideh on the cheek, looking upon her in the light of a sister sovereign. The Queen-Mother was much excited, and flew into a towering passion. Here was a direct insult from a *giaour*. She took to her bed, refused food for four-and-twenty hours, and had several baths before she could consider herself purged of this enormity, this terrible stain; and this old bigot, probably herself born of a slave, thought herself too good, forsooth, to be saluted by the beautiful Eugénie, consort of one of the most powerful emperors of the continent of Europe.

The Turkish gentleman is amiable, and has a good heart, and that means good manners ready made. Like the Spaniard, he, with his *bonhomie*, offers everything that he has. You admire his jewelled pipes: 'They are yours, Effendi.' You praise his horses or his *konak*—all is at your disposal. Even in the lowest classes their innate courtesy is most remarkable. The Turk is much given to hospitality, and will go great lengths; but yet is shrewd enough not to be

imposed upon, and can show that he is not a man to be fooled. Touching this, a story is told by that best of *raconteurs*, Mr. Ralston. A peasant presented a pasha with a hare, which in due course was converted into soup. Soon the peasant called, and was well treated. A little later came several neighbours of the man who had given the hare; they also received a 'square' meal. But by and by more visitors came claiming hospitality, saying that they were neighbours of the neighbour of the man who had given the hare. The pasha was now excited, and put his foot down. All they got was a glass of water each, with the remark that it was 'the sauce of the hare.'

One word about the slaves. Although the public slave-market has been abolished since the time of the Crimean War and the trade is now contraband, the system of providing them is carried on with the greatest ease, and winked at by the authorities. So long as there are harems, so long must these establishments be supplied. The merchants bring them from Circassia, Georgia, and from Tripoli. Those from Circassia fetch the highest price, and it is generally from this race that a sultan's wife is chosen. At certain seasons whole caravans arrive, and the pick of them will be handed over to some high Turkish lady who makes a business of the matter, and acts as intermediary. She trains and educates the girls, and at the fitting time makes her bargain. A handsome Circassian will fetch 150*l.*, and when thoroughly educated 200*l.* may easily be asked and obtained. It should be stated that the slaves in Turkey are very kindly treated, and on the whole their lot is a happy one.

Admitting the necessity of being liberal with your 'tips' when requiring information in foreign countries, nowhere are you so plundered as in the East ; for it is not too much to say that the actual ruler of Turkey is Prince *Backsheesh*. The following will give some idea of the torments he puts you to. A traveller recently related his experiences as a candidate for a concession from the Porte for an important company which was to give a good slice of revenue to the Turkish Government, at the same time proving highly profitable to the company concerned. In his numerous visits to the Porte—the Turkish Whitehall or Downing-street—he had to give backsheesh all round to door-keepers, hangers-on, mutes, military officers in full uniform, to the 'vekil,' an official whose duty it was to introduce him on the several occasions to the pasha or minister, and not forgetting a round sum to the tune of three or four thousand pounds to the pasha himself. Then, after all this had been done, his scheme must go before the Council of State. *They* had to be 'squared.' The whole proceeding being Turkish, a delay of course occurred. After having spent some thousands of pounds, he was told that if he really expected to do any good at all he must go in for palace intrigue, and bribe the chief eunuch or coffee-bearer, or both, or whoever had the ear of the Sultan. He did all this as recommended ; got the greedy pasha (the only obstacle to his scheme) appointed to high office,

and the Sultan immediately passed his iradé. The company was floated forthwith. The total amount of backsheesh levied was the trifling sum of fifteen thousand pounds, and the negotiator was complimented by every one in Constantinople for having carried the affair through so quickly and so economically !

The only safeguard for the Turkish Empire, we venture to say, is to be found in the single word 'reform.' This alone will prevent it crumbling to pieces, ay, and rapidly too. Will the Turk ever reform? Socially no real improvement will ever take place until corruption and bribery are trampled on, and the condition and status of the women considered. That is to say, reform means annihilating 'backsheesh' and the institution of the harems. Abolish slavery, and there is no longer any *raison d'être* for a harem. The mistresses cannot live a secluded life if the subordinates are free ; for in that case the privacy of the harem will have vanished. Politically speaking, surely some clever and enterprising Turkish patriot, like Fuad or Ali Pasha, will rise up and regenerate their country. With such a soil and climate as Turkey is blessed—with such illimitable resources, what could not be done ! But the root of all the evil in the Government of Turkey is bribery. Once depose Prince Backsheesh and raise the standard of their women, we shall see the Turks fairly on the road pointing to reform and a sound administration. But not until then. *Chi vivra vedrà.*

EDWARD DEBURY.

LADY BEAUTY.

Book the Fifth.

LADY BEAUTY'S SORROW.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH DISPLAYS SOPHIA IN A CHARACTER THAT MAKES A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN
BEAUTIFUL INDEED.

THREE weary hours dragged by that night before tired Sophia fell asleep, and sleep had no sooner closed her eyelids than she was aroused. A low intense whisper, which even in the moment of wakening she felt to be charged with terror, broke her short slumber.

'Sophia! Sophia!' she heard her mother uttering in her ear.

Wide awake in an instant, and alarmed by the way in which her mother spoke, she sat up in bed. Mrs. Temple was standing beside her in her night-dress, and, by the dim light of the lamp which burned in her room, she saw that the old woman's face was almost lifeless from its expression of intense alarm.

'Mamma! mamma!' she cried out. 'What is the matter?'

'Hush! hush!' the mother answered, motioning her not to speak so loud. 'If we are heard we shall be killed.'

'What is the matter?' Sophia asked again, now almost as terrified as her mother.

'There are robbers in the house,' Mrs. Temple answered, gasping for utterance. 'Come here—softly.'

She motioned Sophia to the door, and, stepping out on the landing, bid her listen. All was dark and still, and for a moment Sophia either heard or thought she heard her mother's heart thumping against her side. But the house was perfectly silent.

'It's nothing, mamma,' Sophia said at last, beginning to speak in her natural voice. 'You made a mistake.'

'Hush!' the mother cried, in the same terrified whisper as before. 'I heard them in the house. I tried to ring the bell in my room, and I find it won't work. It was quite right yesterday. This is a planned robbery. The servants are in it; we shall be killed, Sophia, murdered. O, what shall I do?'

And now, indeed, Sophia, straining her ears to listen, did hear a strange sound below-stairs, and, bending over the balustrade, she plainly saw one gleam of light hastily vanishing, as if a lantern had for an instant been turned in the wrong direction. Nearly dead with fear she listened again, and soon after sounds

in the entrance-hall, as if a heavy box were being cautiously moved, convinced her that her mother was not wrong. She took the old woman's shaking hand and led her back to her own room.

'We must try my bell, mamma; we must ring that. The noise will frighten them.'

'Try it, try it!' the mother answered. She could hardly articulate, and the words came from between her motionless lips as if she had not uttered them.

But when Sophia tried her own bell the result was simply that the wires pulled lightly and no sound was made. These, too, had been put out of order.

'I knew it!' the old woman gasped. 'The servants are in it. We shall both be murdered here, in this room.'

And in truth the position was frightful enough. Their windows overlooked the garden, and to open these and cry for help would have been not only vain, but would have added danger to danger. Mrs. Temple had sunk upon the bed, and in the paralysis of terror seemed to be losing consciousness; and Sophia, although she tried to keep her senses, felt as if she herself would swoon away.

'There is nothing to be done,' the old woman said. 'We must wait till they come and kill us. O Sophia, Sophia! can't you do anything to save me?'

It was surprising to see how utterly prostrated with fear the active energetic woman had become in a few moments. And Sophia, the quiet and delicate girl, was even now growing more collected. She remembered that the former owner of the house had erected in one wing a kind of belfry, with a bell of sonorous tongue hanging in it; for he was a nervous householder, dwelling in fear of thieves. The girls knew this belfry—so they called it—well, and had more than once rung the bell in the daytime in sport; and now Sophia thought that if she were only there, she might easily raise such an alarm as would effectually frighten away the robbers. But how to reach the belfry? The only way was across the very hall where the robbers were now at work. Sophia could not make up her mind to go even a step down the stairs; and as to consulting her mother in her present paralysed state, that was altogether useless. She stood irresolute, herself almost losing her senses with fear, but neither moving nor speaking until the old woman called out again,

'Sophia, Sophia! can't you do anything to save me?'

This appeal had a wholesome effect. Nerving herself by an almost superhuman effort, the brave girl replied,

'I will try, mamma; but you must stay here.'

'Not alone, Sophia,' she answered. 'I dare not stay alone. You shall not leave me.'

'I must, mamma,' she replied. 'I must leave you. You can lock your door behind you. I don't think they will come up-stairs. Quick; follow me and lock the door.'

She stole out, and her mother rose up and went after her. Just as she was going out the old woman caught her hand again.

'Sophia, you must not leave me; I shall die before you come back.'

'Lock the door,' Sophia whispered again. And her mother heard her; for, as she stole into the dark passage, the door was softly shut upon her, and the key was turned.

It was a truly frightful situation for the girl. Nearly mad as she was with fear, she yet gathered up courage—how she knew not—to steal a few steps down-stairs. And now the noises in the hall were quite audible, and again she was just about to fly back, and take her chance in her own room with her mother. Just at this juncture a little bit of courage seemed to kindle in her breast, and she waited a moment, and then stole three steps down-stairs. Here, at the turning, she saw plainly that there was light in the hall; and somehow the sense that she was in the darkness and the robbers in the light gave her a sensation of returning security. She listened, trembled, and then with shaking limbs ventured three steps down the second flight. She could distinctly hear the burglars talking, and as one of them gave a low brutal laugh she shuddered to think what wretches were near. Sophia always declared that the next few steps she took unconsciously, and that she only knew herself when she found she was peering from the dark angle of the stairs into the hall.

Three men were there. It was evident that they had mistaken an old oak chest which stood against the wall for a depository of valuables, and this they were now trying to force open. They were quite occupied for the moment, and from her dark angle Sophia could plainly observe their movements. It was curious that now, when fear might altogether have overcome her, she began to feel a renewal of courage. She looked across the dark hall to the passage on the other side which she wished to reach, and she resolved while the robbers were still engaged upon the chest to make a dart across. Several seconds she waited, until she saw an opportunity, and, while the men were trying to force the oaken lid, she flew across the hall, and was in the passage on the other side, hidden from view.

But now, as she slowly groped her way along the passage, a new terror arose. What if the belfry-door should be locked? The room was never used, and it might well be that the key had been taken away. The bare idea so terrified her that she scarce dared to creep to the door, lest her fear should be verified. But

there was no returning, and the next moment she felt the door, and finding the handle she turned it slowly, and to her unspeakable joy the door opened at her touch. O, what a rush of relief she felt! Her position might still be perilous; but the greatest danger was past. She crept round the wall, feeling her way until her hands touched the bell-rope; and then, drawing a breath for the effort, she pulled hard and fast, and immediately the iron tongue outside began to answer her back in tones that seemed to



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tell that she was once again in communication with the honest world outside, and need fear no more. Stroke after stroke the bell sent its resonant alarm out upon the midnight; and at each note Sophia tugged with fresh energy, and the faithful bell above seemed to grow more vehement as she with gathering strength applied to it for help.

CHAPTER II.

A VERY SHORT CHAPTER; BUT IN IT THERE MEET THE BROOK AND THE RIVER
OF THIS STORY.

THIS passage, the only morsel of sensation in our boudoir story, has been dismissed as rapidly as was possible. Indeed,

it would never have been told at all, had it not been a link in the chain of incident on which the history depends.

Of course all Kettlewell applauded our Sophia. Her midnight descent, her flight across the hall, her plucky behaviour at the bell-rope,—everything she had done was praised. The burglars fled at the first peal, but Sophia kept on ringing until all the neighbours were aroused ; and then such a congregation of servants and others had gathered in the house and grounds that fear was not to be thought of. All of us applauded her quickness of thought about the belfry ; the only person who spoke in anything like a qualified tone being Egerton, who remarked that he was far from wishing to cast any slur on Sophia, but still he must say that she would have made a great deal more noise if she had used the Chinese gong which stood in the hall. For sounding an alarm, Egerton said, there was nothing like a Chinese gong. Sophia, in the gentlest way, but with laughter trembling on her lips, pointed out that the gong stood just where the robbers were working ; upon which Egerton retorted that he had not said anything about where it stood, but only that for sounding an alarm there was nothing like a Chinese gong.

Now how would you expect the little mother to have acted ? To have denied her own abject terror, and attenuated Sophia's bravery ? She did nothing of the kind.

'I was dead with fear,' she said, in her gay way. 'Courage is not one of my virtues. I could no more have gone down those stairs and past those dreadful men than I could raise that piano with my finger. Deuce take my heart'—sometimes, in her easy moods, she would let fly an expression of this sort—'I thought it would never beat again ! And Sophia was as cool as if she were going down to see a visitor. Sophia ought to be a soldier's wife : she ought to be a soldier herself. Few women would have acted as she did that night. Really I would not have believed she had it in her.'

One happy result for the poor girl was that her mother's wrath was not so much appeased as effaced. The whole Prendergast incident was for the time forgotten ; and when Mrs. Barbara Temple's mind reverted to the matter, she admitted to herself that in charging Sophia with weakness she made a great mistake. She still deplored the issue of the affair, but she never again reproached her daughter, and she even made one or two indirect apologies for her severity of speech, and these we may be sure Sophia was only too willing to accept.

And now there began quite an era in Sophia's life. Her lover was absent, and they were not allowed to communicate with each other, for on this point Mrs. Temple never relaxed. She was not formally engaged ; indeed, she was understood to be

open to an offer—a fact which her mother, still following her original policy, took care to publish abroad. Caroline and Sibyl now fully agreed with their mother that Sophia was acting recklessly in allowing the freshness of her youth to pass away under this blighting romantic spell. And all this time, only by the merest chance, seldom—perhaps never—could she hear anything of Percival Brent. He might be untrue ; and even then, according to the words of their agreement, she could not reproach him with inconstancy. It was a trying time for her ; but during this period her character was formed, and she who on her fiftieth birthday was with general consent and delight styled ‘Lady Beauty’ learned her secret of charming in this period of anxiety and waiting, when her constancy and her patience were so severely tried. I here relate the main incidents of this uneventful period, and having at the same time tried by touches here and there to give you an idea of the maturity of charms towards which Time was bearing our dear heroine, I shall be able in my next book to tell you how it all ended : whether Percival was true or false ; whether or not happiness of the kind she expected rewarded the constancy of her pure, glowing, and yet never impatient affection.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH THE WEALTHY MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE DISCOVERS SYMPTOMS OF BANKRUPTCY.

DURING the weeks that immediately followed, Sophia observed that her mother was very often thoughtful, and would talk to herself, nod her head, shake it, frown, and make a number of those signs which denote that we are thinking hard and reasoning with ourselves. She never dropped the smallest allusion to Prendergast, and Sophia, glad of the opportunity, seized the favourable moments, and showered caresses and attentions upon her mother, which the mother for her part received with every mark of satisfaction. Thus the time, which, had it fulfilled Sophia’s expectations, would have been one long scene of reproaches and regrets, did as a matter of fact glide easily and pleasantly by, giving another illustration of that great common truth, that if we only wait until our troubles actually come they will often turn out no troubles at all. Sophia, however, wondered what the moot case could be that her mother so pondered and argued with herself.

‘Sophy,’ the little woman said one morning at breakfast, ‘this house is too large for us. I shall give it up, and rent a small one rather nearer the town. Our lease expires in September, and I don’t fancy another winter in this lonely place.’

So this had been the matter of internal debate. Sophia was

not at all surprised to find that her mother was giving up the Beeches, for the burglary was a sufficient reason; but when the old woman began to talk of reasons of economy, she concluded that, ashamed to confess to fear, she was excusing her flight by alleging pecuniary motives. Sophia, however, soon found that there was more in the matter than she had imagined.

'I shall keep one carriage in future, no more,' Mrs. Temple said a few days after. 'One carriage, one horse, and one manservant. Quite enough for us two.'

'Mamma,' Sophia cried, 'the idea of you trotting about in a little brougham with one horse! How funny you will feel!'

'Not at all, dear, so long as the carriage is neat and the horse what a horse should be. Quite enough for us, Sophy. More seems affectation; just like those Dones. Horrid people, with a fresh carriage for every day in the week—and such horses! It strikes me that whenever a vulgarian makes money and retires, being of no family himself, he resolves to have horses with a pedigree. No, no, Sophy; we shall not lose anything by living quietly. Leave that to me, dear; you may safely leave that to me.'

Great was the astonishment of Kettlewell. Not that we wondered at Mrs. Temple giving up the Beeches: with us, as with Sophia, the burglary was a sufficient reason for that. But when she chose a small box of a villa near the entrance of the town, and put down two of her carriages, dismissed five of her servants, and in a general way reduced her expenditure by more than one half, we were surprised indeed. Had Sophia been married the affair would have been intelligible; but who, for any motive except necessity, ever heard of a match-making mother lowering her mode of living until all her daughters were settled? There was a great deal of talk in Kettlewell, and a great deal of whispering. Had Mrs. Temple been living beyond her means? Had she made some bad speculation? Was this only the prelude to a final crash? All these questions were asked freely, and most of us had some surmise to make; but nobody quite agreed with anybody else except in one point—Mrs. Temple was not the woman to retrench without urgent reason; and after all, the most likely reason was that she had not the money to maintain her original grandeur. One spiteful lady friend congratulated her ironically behind her back on having married two daughters well, at all events, and said that even if the mother died a bankrupt, dear Sophia would always have a comfortable home with her sisters.

Car and Sibyl were as much amazed as the rest, and, not daring to inquire of their mother, they beset Sophia with questions which she was unable to answer. Sibyl was especially

searching for reasons why, her husband having directed her mind to the subject in his elephantine way.

'It is not for us,' he said, pausing as he stirred his coffee—for they were at breakfast—'it is not for us to ask questions, but still your mother's conduct is unaccountable. If you could find out whether she has been speculating, or if her affairs are involved, I might interfere with advantage—to your mother.'

Goldmore, as he said this, cleared his throat and shifted his chin between his shirt-collar in an imposing way. The chin was very well shaved, and the shirt-collar very white and stiff, as is invariably the case with millionaires in the morning.

'I might advise with your mother,' the great man added, seeing that his wife did not speak, 'and tender her my aid.'

Sibyl was really alarmed at this suggestion from her husband, who, as she well knew, was neither a meddler nor one who formed his opinions hastily. She hurried off to Sophia and declared her misgivings; and all Sophia could say was that there seemed good reason for fearing that something was wrong. But, Sophia added, she had already tried every possible means to find out her mother's actual position and motives, and had entirely failed.

'In that case,' Archibald Goldmore said, when his wife reported this result to him, 'I shall call upon your mother myself, and introduce the subject. It is my duty to offer her my counsel. What can she know about business?'

And he called upon little Mrs. Barbara, who received him with her usual cheerfulness. Goldmore was a favourite with her in his way.

'You know me well enough to be quite sure that I am no "Paul Pry,"' the millionaire said. He seemed to think that there was magnanimity in his very mention of that character in connection with himself. '"I hope I don't intrude" is not often on my lips, for this simple reason—I *know* I don't intrude.'

Little Mrs. Temple gave him a brisk nod and smile, and he proceeded, approaching his subject with slow dignity, as if he were driving the Lord Mayor's coach round a ticklish corner.

'We have been a little surprised—Sibyl and myself—at the great change you have made in your household; and knowing as we do your sound common sense, we are sure there is a good reason for it. It is a great change,' he added, looking round the small drawing-room, 'although you have displayed your usual good taste here from—from—floor to ceiling.'

'Yes,' Mrs. Temple replied unconcernedly, 'it is a nice little house.'

'This has been a bad time for investments,' Goldmore remarked, resolved to keep near his real business, 'and expenses are very

heavy. I have sometimes thought how little I imagined when I first married how costly my establishment would be.' The old rogue lived to the full a third within his income. 'I am sometimes frightened at expenditure, Mrs. Temple.'

'Are you?' she remarked. 'Now, I never am!'

'I am glad to hear it,' he answered. 'To tell you the truth, I was afraid that you might have found your own expenses a little in excess of your calculations; and to be quite plain with you, I came this morning to know if there is any business you would like to talk over with me. I know,' Goldmore said, with the modesty of a monarch, 'something about affairs. Now can I be of any use to you? Can my knowledge of—the money market'—this being a joke he laughed a little—'be of any use to you?'

'Not any, Archibald,' she said. 'I always manage my own business.'

'There is no difficulty I can clear up?'

'All my business is straightforward and intelligible.'

'Then,' said the baffled inquirer, 'it only remains for me to say that I hope you do not consider my visit and my offer at all impertinent?'

'Quite the contrary, Archibald,' she cried vivaciously. 'Kind, most kind. No one in the world I would sooner have consulted if I had wanted advice. But I don't want advice, Archibald.'

So Archibald Goldmore went home as wise as he came; and when his wife met him in the avenue, and asked him if he knew everything, it was with some slight vexation he replied that he knew nothing.

'But I have my fears,' he said; 'and very grave fears. However,' he added, seeing his wife's face fall, 'don't be alarmed. If anything happens, we shall see what can be done.' He spoke like a financial pillar: there could be no dreadful crash in the family so long as he stood unshaken.

Egerton and Caroline talked the matter over too; and Egerton said at once that his mother-in-law was going out of her mind; and deeming it his duty to prepare Sophia for the worst,

'I have noticed this coming on for months,' he said to her, while she could scarcely look him in the face for laughter. 'There have been many symptoms which I have been watching. I would not be frightened, Sophia—being frightened never does any good—but still, if I were you, I should sleep with a strait-waistcoat under my pillow, and then, if anything sudden happened, you could clap it on. Forewarned is forearmed, Sophia.'

Thus both within the family circle and outside it the affairs of Mrs. Temple were discussed with great assiduity; but relatives, friends, and acquaintances were alike left in the dark.

The ordinary set of people talked the matter over, wondered, surmised, and then forgot all about it. But the family could not so lightly dismiss a doubt which concerned their own interests; and in the family the whispered belief was that the little mother, for all her shrewdness, had run into extravagance, and that poverty was now forcing her to retrench. Then came questions: What is her position now? From what source comes her income? What will Sophia have when she dies? And these misgivings were the more anxious, because it was already known that a portion of her property at least would at her death go to her first husband's heir.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH SOPHIA MAKES LOVE BY DEPUTY, AND THE REV. ANTHONY BRENT CEASES TO BE RECTOR OF KETTLEWELL.

WITH all her seriousness Sophia had never been what we call an ecclesiastical girl. The modern fashion of church decoration, and other customs of reverence and taste in religion, had not at that time fairly arisen; but ladies were even then very active in church work. From this Sophia had always held aloof, greatly to the surprise of successive clergymen, who had marked her as likely to be useful in their parishes. To repeated invitations that she would become a district visitor or Sunday-school teacher, Sophia had always answered no; and she had never given any reason for this refusal. Whether she liked dancing, and feared that her pleasure might be restricted, or what may have been her reason, I cannot guess. Even when our Rector tried to persuade her to help him, her answer was still a simple no; nor could the merry little clergyman by any semi-jocose questioning extract from her a syllable more. He turned about and tried gravity and serious remonstrance; but with no better result. Accordingly Mr. Brent was somewhat surprised when, about six months after his son's departure, Sophia asked him if she could be of any use to him in the parish or the Sunday-school. Of course he accepted her offer gladly. And a capital teacher and punctual visitor he found her. But Mr. Brent noticed that at their various little meetings Sophia would manage to linger until the other ladies were gone; then she would talk a bit, and somehow the talk always veered about till it settled on Percival, when Sophia would ask a few questions and be gone. Even little Mr. Brent, who was not an observer of things, sometimes felt that these two or three sentences about Percival were with Sophia the business of the day. At an earlier period of his career he would have broken many a jest upon this discovery; but jests were by-gones with our poor Rector. The twinkle had fallen from his eye, and the blitheness had sunk out of his tone. A pallor was stealing over his face, and he was fast turning

gray. As one of his parishioners who made her living by laundry-work said, 'He looked like a gown that had been to the wash : ' the colours had run ; what remained was himself and not himself.

And now, disregarding for a moment our small chronology, let me dismiss the Rector from this tale, where, indeed, he has little more to do. Poor Sophia clung to him more than most of his parishioners, and she found a real pleasure in his society, because it seemed to be a kind of remote contact with Percival. The bedroom where Percival had slept from boyhood was in that house. The books he had read were on the shelves. Here he used to sit at dinner. There was the garden-walk where he was wont to saunter with his pipe. She knew the very peg



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where his hat used to hang. Somehow he did not seem quite so far away when she was in the precincts of his own home ; and the Rector's dispirited talk had a certain liveliness for her, because he was Percival's father. Occasionally, too, she would get a glimpse at her absent lad himself. For instance, one day, as they were walking together to the garden-gate, the Rector said, 'Percy planted that rose.'

Next week, as they went the same way, Sophia stopped beside the rose-tree to pluck off a few withered leaves, and make the plant look trim. Mr. Brent, stopping with her, said in his abstracted way,

'I never told you ; Percival planted that rose.'

He never told her ! Why, by that time she knew how many leaves were on it, and could spell its name and knew its pros-

pect of life, having become for Percival's sake a perfect horticultural actuary.

Then another day the Rector said listlessly—for he never joked with her about his son, and indeed seemed to have only a faint remembrance of that connection—

‘I heard from Percy this morning; would you care to hear his letter?’

Sophia, who would have lived on bread and water for a week rather than miss one line her darling wrote, said, trying with miserable affectation to imitate the Rector's apathetic tone,



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‘Yes, if it is not troubling you.’

‘Perhaps,’ Mr. Brent said, ‘as you don’t seem greatly to care for it, we need not read this one, but wait for the next.’

He said this quite innocently, but he put Sophia in a dreadful fix. With the instinct of true generalship, however, she resolved to recover her lost position by a bold stroke.

‘I would not miss hearing it for the world,’ she said audaciously. ‘O, do read it!’

And the Rector, looking up with a faint smile, like a man who remembers something, took the letter out and read it through.

In none of these letters did Percy mention her name, until

three years after his departure, when one day the Rector read this line: '*If you ever see the girl who was once my little Sophia, give her my love.*'

He read it mechanically, as he did everything now; then, holding the letter with loose fingers, it slipped from him and skimmed down under the table, and presently he was called from the room. Sophia dropped on her knees and caught the sheet up, and read the line again:

'If ever you see the girl who was once my little Sophia, give her my love.'

Bless me, how she kissed that sheet! It got all the love-kisses that had been ripening on her lips for six-and-thirty months. Had it been the age of transformation, that sheet would surely have turned into a lover under the transmuting power of those kisses. And then Miss Sophia, who had a terribly tender conscience of her own, looked at the letter, and coloured up at a certain suggestion of her own mind, and wondered would it be very wrong, and would the Rector ever find it out, and was it very mean of her to do it in the hope that he never would find it out? And, deciding on action, she nicely tore off the finest little morsel of the paper, where on the last line these precious words were inscribed; and she slipped the shred into her watch-case, where she could look at it night and morning. *The little girl that was my Sophia.* 'That is! that shall be! until you bid her cease!' she said a thousand times, as if that morsel of paper were his living spokesman. Truly the girl was very much in love, and absence made her heart grow fonder, which is not usual with either male or female hearts, unless I see the world wrongly altogether.

About this time Sophia—and not Sophia only, but all of us—began to notice that Mr. Brent looked paler than usual, walked with a slight drag of the right foot, and sometimes missed a word out of a sentence without being aware of it. Again, he would observe the mistake, and correct it with an appearance of irritation. 'Brain mischief going on,' old Sparker whispered. And he was right; for one Sunday evening, after preaching, the Rector suddenly became speechless in the vestry, and lost his power of motion. He never spoke a syllable again; and even when he opened his eyes there was no reason in them. A dreadful storm of wind and rain came on that night, and blew the golden cock from off the church steeple, and some of the masonry with it. The tempest raged round the Rectory garden, and uprooted two great elm-trees, and cast them across the lawn in gigantic ruin. Meanwhile the Rector lay as quiet as if a summer breeze was blowing. There was no storm that could roar loud enough to disturb his sleep. And in the morning, when we

awoke to see what the wind had done in our gardens and parks, we heard our kind-hearted little Rector had departed from us for ever, just while the storm was uttering its fiercest blast.

We said that we could have better spared a better man, looked grave a moment, remarked how uncertain life is, and then talked of the storm, and forgot the Rector. But to Sophia his death was a terrible sorrow. Somehow Percival seemed gone; she would hear no more about him, nor have the remote but still very actual comfort of talking with his father and seeing his old haunts. She had borne trials already, and other trials awaited her; but this was, after all, one of the sorest she ever felt. She grew lonely, sad, doubting; began to think Percy would forget her; tried valiantly to battle with her fears; cried many hours when she was alone, then wiped her eyes and went down-stairs smiling; but it was an aching heart that beat in her breast. And the body of the Rector was laid to sleep in the churchyard; and his successor came. The king was dead, and the cry was 'Long live the king!' for we were all pleased with our new parson. He preached sermons shorter by five minutes than those of Mr. Brent. He kept two curates, good-looking bachelors. He worked the parish well. So we confessed every one that the loss of poor Brent was gain to us; especially these last few years, we said, when trouble overcame him, and this brain mischief had been stealthily making its way nearer to his vital part. Very soon the old Rector's name was forgotten; but day by day and week by week we noticed that over the grave where his mortal part lay fresh flowers were strewn by some tender and unforgetting hand.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH THE LIVES OF OUR CHARACTERS ADVANCE A LITTLE—SOME TOWARDS MERIDIAN, SOME TOWARDS SUNSET, SOME TOWARDS NIGHT.

FIVE years had passed away since Sophia and Percival were parted, and time had left its marks upon other personages of our story beside its heroine. Without any question Sibyl had greatly increased in personal attractiveness. Her dark superb style was developed and heightened as she drew nearer to the meridian of life. No doubt the early bloom of youth was gone; but her form had become more finely rounded, and her carriage had become more stately. She was a beautiful woman of the world; no man ever looked at her once only. But her manner had become more reticent than ever. She relied on her beauty for a place among her sex, and was at no pains to cultivate conversation, letters, or any branch of the art of pleasing except the setting forth of personal charms. Had her manner and her talk been what she might easily have made them, she would have shone

out as a beauty indeed in the prime of her womanhood. For Sibyl had no lack of sense nor of education neither ; but proudly reposing on her incontestable loveliness, she rather withdrew than put forward her other attractions. Still she could display herself when she pleased ; one occasion I well remember, when she met in company a vivacious Italian, who was extremely struck with her appearance, and paid her a profusion of gay compliments. At last, his English failing, he tried to enhance his polite speeches by some poetical quotation in his own language, adding that he was afraid she would hardly understand what he had said. On the instant Sibyl answered him back with a return quotation, as I understood, from the same author. Not knowing Italian, I could not appreciate her readiness : but that the retort was lively and happy was sufficiently proved by the foreigner's delight. His eyes sparkled with pleasure.

'You know more than I do,' he exclaimed, clapping his hands. 'You are a wonder—a wonder, my dear lady !'

But Sibyl relapsed into silence, and treated her success with a sincerity of indifference which showed how lightly she regarded any mental achievement.

Car had meanwhile changed in a way the very opposite. She had grown thinner ; and her frame, which was a large one, was more prominent. Car had gone in for intellectual ideas, and was improving her mind diligently, and was fast obtaining in our little town the reputation of being what is now called a woman's rights woman. She had become rather too fond of talking in mixed companies on high subjects, and so fell into the very error her lively little mother had foreseen ten years before.

'As to Car,' Mrs. Barbara said one day, 'she is turning schoolmistress. She talks lectures. I wonder she does not get a few lessons in action,' the little satirist said ; 'it would become her drawing-room and dinner-table finely. Any actor or popular preacher could tell how to arrange her elbows when she is discoursing. I can't ; for my education, dears, was neglected—in that particular department. We only danced and sang and flirted when I was a girl. Why, I remember once meeting a man who talked of Peru ; and, I assure you, dears, I thought it was somewhere in Germany ! But what matter ? The world was ours, and we had only to live and enjoy, and make others enjoy. And we did it, girls ; we did it ! O, that I was young again !'

Caroline Doolittle, however, was not very popular in Kettlewell ; and this was undoubtedly owing, not to her sound mental cultivation—which was as genuine as it was laudable—but to the mischievous habit she had of bringing her attainments into prominence. I suppose she did it to manifest her superiority

over the rest of the women; but, unfortunately, the result was that, while she vexed the women, which she did not mind, she repelled the men, which she did mind, very much.

One man, however, paid her the tribute of a homage which was as unceasing as the voice of a waterfall. Morning, noon, and night Egerton sounded the praises of his wife. He had grown stout and healthy-looking, and he was as great a simpleton as ever. Indeed, his giggle had got new notes of imbecility in it, and was now a perfect wonder of vacuity in unarticulated sound. He had a slight drop in his lower lip, too; and a fixed smile, which might have made his very dog understand what mental weakness is in mankind. But Egerton adored his wife. They had three children now, and from infancy he pointed these children to their mamma as the sole model of excellence and strength. Egerton was very fond of nursing his children, and would walk up and down with them by the hour, telling them at brief intervals to look at their mamma.

'Tremendously gifted woman,' he would say sometimes to his friends. Then dropping his voice like Guy Fawkes in the conspirators' room: 'Sometimes I see her reading for two hours at a stretch. I have timed her by my chronometer. What would have become of me if I had not married that woman, I don't like to say. I *think*,' Egerton would add solemnly, 'I *think*, with my disposition and my way of looking at things, you know, I should have gone to the Bad.'

Egerton had also given himself up greatly to the study of cooking, and had a little room fitted up with a stove, and hung round with pots and pans. I think this must have been about the time when the great Soyer was teaching us English people how to work wonders with soup, and fish, and fowl. In this room Egerton would concoct rare dishes, generally coming out with a very red face, and now and then upsetting a boiling saucepan down his thighs; on which occasions he would rush from the room shrieking, and declare that it was really too bad, and he would give the whole thing up. Egerton had an idea of working a reform in the present way of cooking red mullet.

'A delicious fish,' he would say; 'but under the present system it is sent up in paper; treated, in fact, as if it were a package. It is intolerable that a delicious fish should be treated as if it were a package.'

Time, which was writing its record on our younger people, had not forgot to pencil deeper lines on Archibald Goldmore. Visible signs of advancing years were upon him, and the elephantine firmness of his tread was going. He stooped; his hair was not so gray as once it had been. Goldmore, the wise, the sensible, the millionaire, was dyeing his hair to keep

up the appearance of youth beside his lovely wife. Ah, lovely young women, what fools you make of us withering elderly men !

And even the little mother, so long undying in her energy, began to show symptoms of decline. The light step was falling into a slower movement ; the quick motions of the frame were seldom seen ; she was growing a little deaf, and every one observed it, though with characteristic vivacity she tried to hide the failing. She began to like quiet—bodily quiet—and would sit in her chair hour after hour ; but her mind was as active and her tongue as pungent as ever, and often Sophia would laugh till she was tired at the little woman's quaint remarks or droll stories of days gone by. She commented on everybody and everything with the same satire, sense, and absorbed worldliness as of old. Her two sons-in-law furnished her with abundant material for criticism, and Sophia often blushed to think how heartily she enjoyed her mother's caustic comments on Goldmore and Egerton. Both were favourites with the old woman ; but Goldmore's mercantile stiffness and Egerton's feebleness of mind were too tempting for her to resist.

'I can hardly keep my countenance, Sophy,' she used to say, 'when these two men come in together. One I can stand ; but both is more than mortal can.' (They generally looked in after church.) '“Mrs. Temple, how do you find yourself this morning ? Pretty well ?”' She hit off Goldmore's voice to the note. 'And then, “O, how are you ? tremendously warm day, isn't it ? I do dislike a tremendously warm day,”' delivered exactly as Egerton would. Thereupon the little satirist would fall back in her chair laughing, and pleased to see Sophia laughing.

'Now really, mamma, you are too bad !' Sophia would say.

'Not a bit, Sophy. You like it or you would not laugh. And, besides, why need the old man be a bore and the young man a blockhead ? O, may the day never dawn when I do anything but laugh at a stupid or a fool !'

Still Sophia was kept in wonder and fear by her mother's growing turn for economy. In some things she was becoming almost penurious, and the question, 'What will it cost ?' which once she disdained to ask of anything that pleased her, was now never off her lips. There was a positive alarm about her manner, too, when any new expense was in view, which was full of grave suggestions ; and Sophia quite tried to reconcile herself to Goldmore's opinion that her mother had lived beyond her means, and was now trying to eke out her means. Besides, the old woman would sometimes, in a covert way, try to sound Sophia as to what she would do when left alone in the world, and once she actually asked if she had any idea of ever making money for herself. This uneasy question pointed only too plainly in the

direction of the practical Goldmore's observation, that Mrs. Temple was living on an income that would perish with her, and that Sophia would be left in poverty. But beyond conjecture no one could go, for the old woman kept her secret and would not suffer any interrogations. To Sophia she confided that she felt a little alteration in strength; but even to her she would not admit that the cause was old age.

'I am a little exhausted, Sophy,' she said one day. 'You see I have worked hard at enjoyment for a great many years. I shall do just what Johnson used to make our peach-trees and vines do at the Beeches. Let me rest for a few months, and next year I shall recruit, regain strength, Sophy, and be as lively as ever. O Sophy, Sophy,' she cried, clapping her withered hands together with a sprightliness which, whether real or feigned, was equally amazing, 'I shall enjoy the world—relish it—smack my lips over it, girl, for years and years to come!'

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH LADY BEAUTY HAS HER PORTRAIT PAINTED IN PRINTER'S INK.

[SHALL I tell you why I have written this story? It was because I met Sophia Temple, then styled 'Lady Beauty,' in her fifty-third year; and her power to charm (at an age when charms are commonly supposed to be dead and gone) led me to ask, What is this woman's secret? And having searched into her life and character, and noted her ways, I venture to offer this imperfect record of her life, and this still more imperfect picture of herself, for the study of her sex generally. I wish to convince women that it is a great mistake on their part to suppose that their power to please departs with youth. At all times I have noticed that men of sense seldom admire—or, if you like, grow enamoured of—women for beauty alone, but for character, manner, taste, and conversation. Now while beauty (we must admit) lessens with time, character, manner, taste, and conversation may each be refined and enriched; and these, I believe, by their improvement can quite compensate for the loss of personal charms. Mere beauty is but one bright unchanging beam—it will even grow wearisome; but wit, sense, courtesy, and humanity are for ever casting forth new and unexpected rays, and enlivening intercourse with agreeable surprises. And so the story of Lady Beauty is written as a humble attempt to encourage women to try to be charming to their latest day. For they can do it if they try.]

Sophia was without question far inferior in physical beauty to Sibyl, and I think most people would have said that she was

not so handsome as Caroline. Her features were regular, her nose straight and fine, her complexion delicate and rosy; but still, in her face she was no model of womanhood. Her expression—and what is expression but character fixed in the countenance?—made Sophia what she was. Her delicate upper lip, with the hint of firmness in its fine line, told of resolution; the soft hazel eyes, with their upward glance, had a look of aspiration; the mouth was full of tenderness, ready to mould itself to every affectionate feeling. But what was this after all? Sophia's nature in Sophia's face!



She was the best dresser I ever knew. Of colour, either by study or natural gift, she was a perfect mistress. Accordingly her appearance pleased numbers of people before they saw her face; and many a time as she went down the street the curiosity of those who walked behind was aroused to see what might be the face of the woman whose gown and mantle were so striking by the harmony or the contrast of their hue. Flowers, ribbons, brooches, all that sets off dress, she used with the most unerring taste. And she managed through all the changes of fashion to respect herself and her own figure and face; in the fashion she always would be, but still she modulated it so as to be the queen

and not the slave. No doubt Sophia must have paid great attention to her dress, but I scarcely think she could have achieved such constant success, or so complete, had she not been a dresser born.

Then her manners in society were captivating. Here I think the little mother's homilies were useful indeed. With what a graceful attention she heard what you had to say! How modestly she gave her own opinion! She was well read, and could take her part in most conversations with ease; and now and then she could deal out a witty stroke. Indeed, Sophia had a great deal of humour, but seldom gave it the rein in society. Night was her time, with Car and Sibyl; and often the two more brilliant girls, as they laughed at her comical reminiscences of the day, would feel how easily Sophia could outshine them if she tried.

She loved the world. Here again the influence of her mother was perceptible, with this difference: that the world in her mother's language signified society, and nothing more, while Sophia would have included in it the whole of nature and life. I do not think I ever saw any one who had such a simple and unaffected enjoyment in living as she. A walk in the woods was enchantment to her; and, on the other hand, I have seen her on the tiptoe of pleasurable excitement for a ball. She was no poetic recluse; she never shunned society or its pleasures, but rather sought them. There was not a particle of affectation about her; indeed, she retained her girlishness and her love of girlish amusements for an unusually long time.

And she certainly remembered her mother's teaching in another particular: she tried to please. She knew that a woman ought to be an object of admiration and affection, and she ruled her whole life with this fact in view. But Sophia understood the art of charming, which, with all their gracefulness, few Englishwomen entirely do. Perhaps Nature feels that she has given our Englishwomen enough already, and, mindful of the limitation which ought to mark all mortal things, has withheld that one gift which would make them irresistible. Sophia knew that face and figure are not everything. She understood that it is the Woman a man admires, not her eyes or nose or lips or waist; the whole Woman,—person, dress, manner, talents, and character. Frenchwomen are in this respect more far-sighted than our English ladies, but even Frenchwomen do not fully realise this great social truth. A woman who knows that her dress is tasteful and her expression agreeable and her conversation lively will be little dismayed to hear of crows'-feet round her eyelids or gray hairs on her temples. Her better part is blooming amidst the gentle decay of more material charms.

You will laugh when I tell you before the story ends how Sophia Temple, Lady Beauty, at the age of fifty-three, had a new lover, and what a lover he was.

One touch I must add to this picture. Sophia was in the best sense of the world a religious woman. 'Without love,' cries a great novelist, 'I can fancy no gentleman.' A little diffidently I should add, without religion I can fancy no lady. Sophia's piety was in no way obtrusive, never puritanical, never ascetic, but gentle, animated, and humane. It quite saved her from her mother's narrow and heartless and merely sparkling worldliness. Sophia loved the world, but had a hope beyond it, and her religion gave a richness, a sweetness, a seriousness to all her charms.

I must admit, however, that many of Lady Beauty's own sex declared her to be nothing particular. That men admired her was not to be denied, but women would often ask dryly what it was for. When I knew her well enough to take such a liberty, I ventured to say to her one day that, greatly as she was praised by our sex, her own appeared to decline to accept her as by any means representative. She laughed with much gaiety.

'Some of us,' she replied, 'admire in ourselves what is forcible and striking. I believe you said to me yourself one day that Lady Macbeth and some other eminent ladies of the Imagination whom we remember make a sufficiently vivid impression to satisfy both sexes. You added something like this: I somewhat doubt if Lady Macbeth would be altogether a success in the drawing-room.'

'What, then, is your idea of a woman?' I asked.

'I have drawn up a set of Beauty rules,' she replied, rising and going to her desk. 'They will be the best answer to your question.' She laughed with great sportiveness, so that I could not tell whether she was jesting or in earnest.

So she gave me her Beauty rules there and then. But these I reserve for the last chapter of this story, when, in parting with my readers and my heroine, I shall narrate two curious illustrations of her power to please.

I repeat, this story is written for the instruction of the tens of thousands of Englishwomen who can be like Sophia Temple if they try. Whoever of my fair readers will follow this amiable example shall be relieved of the anxiety of glancing over her shoulder for ever to see what brighter beauty of later date and fresher charms may be coming up behind. Youth and the attractions of youth need not be despised by such a woman; neither need they be envied. Her knowledge of society, her ways of the world, her familiarity with character—these, together with taste, refine-

ment, virtue, and the desire to please, will give her the victory over time. Like our dear Lady Beauty, she too shall be charming to her latest day.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTAINS THE ACCOUNT OF A BOXING-MATCH WHICH DID COME OFF, AND THE ORIGIN OF A LOVE-MATCH WHICH DID NOT.

PRENDERGAST, who resided not far from Kettlewell, had occasional opportunities of meeting the Temples; and it had been the little mother's expectation that he might renew his suit, and, perhaps, after a time, draw Sophia's affections to himself. He made no sign, however; and for long enough it seemed as if our heroine was to have no farther trouble from mankind. But at last—at the end of the five years just mentioned—a new lover came upon the scene.

His name was Done. He was the only son of one Mr. John Done, a retired merchant of great wealth, whose antecedents were generally described in this way, that he had something to do with leather. The Dones were plain people, but not vulgar; and having resided in Kettlewell for twenty years, and being charitable and religious, they had gradually made their way into our town society. In fact, they were now received in companies where, at their first coming, they dared not have set foot. Still, it was never forgotten that Mr. Done was not altogether one of us. When any stranger would make inquiry concerning him, the reply would generally be in this form: 'Done is a worthy old fellow, and gives capital dinners. If you want a subscription for any good cause, go to Done. He is modest, unaffected, and not the least purse-proud. *In early life he had something to do with leather.*' This last clause was a formula repeated as faithfully as if it were a line of 'God save the Queen.'

The virtue of the Dones being not of Mrs. Barbara Temple's kind—piety and charity could not make her regard anybody with favour—and their origin and manner being plain, she had never liked them. Indeed, at home—she would not ridicule people in company—she would sometimes say to her daughters that nothing could ever be made of these glorified tradespeople. Then, with a characteristic dread of a too sweeping assertion, she would add: 'Except sometimes, dears—except sometimes.' 'You know, girls,' she said one day, in her gay style, 'it is a proverb that there is nothing like leather; I don't think there is.' Which she delivered with one of her Frenchified faces of dislike, which always set the girls laughing. The plain Dones dreaded the witty, dashing, fashionable Mrs. Barbara Temple; and Mrs.

Barbara Temple regarded the plain Dones with repressed, but not invisible, scorn.

There were John Done the First, and John Done the Second. As is very often the case with sons of self-made men, John Done junior, while lacking his father's native sense and business energy, had inherited a double portion of his homeliness, made quite intolerable by a brassy assurance and a disregard of other people's feelings, which indeed amounted to an anxiety to inflict pain wherever he could. At school he had been hated for a tyrant and a bully; and it was also known among the boys that he would tell a lie—and that not a schoolroom lie—whenever it suited his game. Percival Brent went to school with him, being just three years his junior. Percival was a bright merry little boy, very well put together, and everybody's favourite; only that Done, who always disliked a boy in proportion to his school popularity or his educational promise, never lost an opportunity of tyrannising over him. One day, when they were all in the playground, Done, in making a high jump, fell very awkwardly, and, amidst the roar of laughter which followed, little Brent ran forward and made a pretence of smoothing the ground after the overthrow of the weighty Done. Exasperated by his fall, Done dashed forward and gave little Brent such a box on the ear as sent him spinning round, until he fell heavily to the ground. Brent sprang up, all knit into compactness with rage, and tried to give Done a blow on the face, which he scornfully warded off, and told the little lad not to be so impudent again. But Brent, bristling and stamping with passion, declared he would have a fight for it; which Done at first refused, for all the boys cried out at the idea. But as the little fellow would not be appeased, Done, having satisfied his honour by one refusal, and always liking to inflict pain, accepted the challenge, and the two stripped to their shirts and went at it. For several rounds little Brent was knocked all over the place; and they all felt for the game little lad, but were sorry to see him so punished, and especially in a hopeless fight. For my lady readers will observe that one of the crowning achievements in the noble art is to imprint your fist on your opponent's face. Now if your arms are only two feet long, while those of your opponent are three feet, it will follow that while he may be merrily hammering your countenance into ruin, your return blows may fall only on the unoffending air. This was just what happened now; and poor little Brent was having a very dispiriting time of it. Some of the boys, however, noticed that he went down wonderfully easy; and others, who knew that the Rector's groom was one of the best pair of fists in the county, began to think that perhaps the little fellow had picked up some tactics from Bobby 'Miller,' and was trying a waiting game.

Done thought so too ; and being a large mealy boy, with rather uncertain wind, he resolved to bring the thing to an end, and gave Brent one savage blow, which produced very disagreeable results on the poor little man's nose. Brent was not knocked out of it, however, as Done hoped ; but the very opposite. He was strung together with fury ; but even in his rage he did not forget the instructions of his master, Bobby 'Miller.' He rushed at Done ; and, while the other in his magnificence was guarding himself carelessly, little Brent 'got in,' and began to return on Done's face all the blows he had received, principal and interest. How those little fists flew and hammered ! How Done retreated over the ground, wildly trying to get his adversary outside range again, while still little Brent drubbed away with astounding rapidity and vigour ! The fact was the little fox was quite fresh, while Done was thoroughly blown. Bobby 'Miller' knew his business, and would have been proud of his young master had he been there to see. At last Done, nearly blind with blows and rage, made one grand effort to destroy his enemy with an appearance of ease. It was fatal to him. Brent was really warm to his work, and not likely to miss an opening. In rapid succession he managed to plant three blows just under Done's left eye, the last delivered with such force that it sent the lumpy fellow to grass, where he lay vanquished, Brent standing over him with fists still clenched, and burning, it seemed, for a little more.

That was sixteen years ago. John Done junior was now a rather bulky young man, with a white flat face, very small sunken eyes, a smile which expressed a narrow mind satisfied with itself, and unprepossessing manners. His habits, too, had not been the best, and it was known in Kettlewell that he was, in his sly way, a man of dissolute habits. He had now been absent, off and on, for nearly four years ; but when he returned home he happened to hear of Sophia Temple and her little affair with Percival Brent. By a curious chance he had met Brent in Australia himself, and, although outwardly civil to him, he remembered with a grudge the thrashing of years gone by ; for his nature was of that sluggish sort, where revenge burns long and sullenly, like fuel in a slow-combustion stove. When he came home and heard about Sophia the thought struck him what a nice girl she was, and what a fine thing it would be to marry the woman for whom his former foe was working now in another hemisphere ! He pondered. His eyes lit with their half-animal gleam. He said, 'I can manage it.'

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE DELIVERS A SERMON ON FLIRTING WOMEN AND ENCHANTED MEN.

MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE was sitting in her favourite armchair, and the sunshine of a bright October morning was shining in the room. But that pleasant light revealed clearly the signs of time, which had for long enough been more or less manifest in the old woman's face. She either did not or could not any longer dress herself with the same deceptive skill as in days gone by, and now in every feature of her face any eye could see that she was an old woman—a very old woman indeed. She sat wrapped up carefully in a splendid Indian shawl, and a fire blazed on the hearth; and she looked cold and somewhat lifeless, although her eyes were still bright and her voice strong. Sophia, who stayed always with her, was reading the *Morning Post* to her, but the old woman did not listen with her accustomed attention.

'Sophy,' she said at last, 'I had a visit from Mrs. Done yesterday.'

'Indeed, mamma!' Sophia replied. She bit her lip, and so hid a smile, spirited and contemptuous, with a dash of amusement in it. 'And what does Mrs. Done want, mamma?'

'She says her son is in love with you.'

'Delightful, mamma!' Sophia replied, now with open amusement on her face. 'So he has thrown his handkerchief at last. He may pick it up again, mamma, and put it in his pocket!'

'Now, Sophia, don't talk in that hasty inconsiderate way,' the old woman said. 'In all those cases we should consider, dear: there is nothing like—'

'Leather, mamma!' Sophia cried merrily, catching up her mother's old mocking phrase. The bright October sunshine and some whim of her own feelings had put her in good spirits that morning.

'Very pleasant, dear,' the little mother remarked, shaking her head soberly. Somehow her whole style of speech was relaxing in energy; her words were pitched low; she did not speak with her former decision. Presently she said,

'You must remember young Mr. Done was never in trade; and beside, Sophia, he will settle twenty thousand pounds on you!'

'Can't be had under forty, mamma!' Sophia seemed resolved to treat the matter in this jocular way. It was plain that she realised that she and her mother had changed positions; she was virtually mistress now; there might be argument, but no struggle of will.

'Sha'n't cry "cherry ripe" under forty thousand pounds,

mamma!' And Sophia tossed her head and looked saucy and engaging and cheap at double the money.

'Now listen to me, Sophia,' her mother said. 'You will never have such another offer—from a money point of view.'

'Well, mamma, I will be serious,' Sophia answered, suiting her face to her words. 'I would not marry that man for anything he could give me. To begin with, I know what his life has been.'

'Now, my dear Sophia,' her mother said, with a deprecating gesture, 'I will not hear anything about his manner of life. The men are all in fault in that way.'

('One I know is not!' Sophia tenderly thought, clasping her darling's memory to her heart.)

'All are in fault that way,' continued Mrs. Temple. 'Some let us know it, others manage to hide it. In fact all are alike. And indeed, Sophia, better marry a man who, before marriage, has—has—*seen the world*, than one who will make you unhappy after. The wilder the bachelor, the steadier the husband, so I often have found it.'

'Now you don't mean it, mamma; you know you don't.'

'I do mean it, indeed, dear; and, besides, whose fault is it if men are wild? Ours, my dear; ours alone. We are so fond of conquest and impression that we never leave them alone. We get them into the habit of mind, dear. Have I not watched women? More especially if a man is at all celebrated, we long to make an impression. All women do. My dear Sophia, the greatest prude that ever lived is pleased if she hears that a celebrated man admires her. Be he married or single, she will not care; she had rather have the tribute of admiration than not have it. O Sophia, we are quite as much to blame as the men. We all like to have them at our feet; I liked it myself, dear.'

'Mamma!'

'When they are celebrated, dear, remarkable, worth catching, you know.'

'What is Mr. Done celebrated for?' Sophia asked scornfully.

'Money, dear. As good a thing as any other. Some men are conspicuous for fortune, others for looks, others for talent, others for family. But when a man is conspicuous for anything, women like to have his admiration, and that is how half the men are spoiled, dear; we do it ourselves. Why, even if a man is conspicuous for virtue, most of us would like to bring him to the ground—to have him sigh for us only once; and then we can toss our heads and be as good as we please. Our vanity is gratified.'

'Now, mamma,' Sophia said, rather shocked at this speech, and not knowing whether her mother was serious or not, but

resolved to treat it as jocular, 'this is only your merry way; do be serious.'

'I will, dear, if you will be serious too.'

'There—I am serious now.'

'Very well, then. Try and make up your mind to marry this young man. Twenty thousand pounds, Sophia!'

'Mamma, figures would not write the sum that I would marry him for. He is a vulgar, selfish, odious fellow. Marry him!' Sophia shivering as when some one walks over our grave. 'Call him husband!'

She made a grimace which her mother could not have surpassed, and which clinched the discussion.

'Very well, Sophy,' the old woman said, sinking back in her armchair rather wearily, 'you must have your own way. Only remember, dear, when I am gone, you had the chance of wealth and ease before I left you.'

The word alarmed Sophia afresh. She was certain now of what her future would be; but she put on a bright face.

'Never mind, mamma, you are not going to leave me yet; and when you do, if all else fails, I can sew gloves at twopence a pair; but I will not marry a man the very thought of whom makes my flesh creep. O mamma, mamma!' Sophia cried, relapsing into gaiety now that her point was won, 'for making you dislike an offer, there's nothing like leather.'

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH SOPHIA'S EYES FILL WITH TEARS.

FOR some reason which I cannot divine, Sophia treated the proposal of the leather-merchant's son as an affront. The matter oozed out—in Kettlewell everything did ooze out sooner or later; and to one or two intimate friends who spoke to her on the subject Sophia expressed herself with a sarcasm which was, perhaps, not fair, and was certainly not prudent. Some kind friend was at the pains of telling young John Done in what terms of ridicule and contempt Sophia had mentioned his name. This gentleman in his own person does not come before us, and it is enough to say that certain disclosures which reached poor Sophia's ears about this time concerning the conduct of Percival Brent in Australia were indirectly communicated to her by her insulted admirer, who, as has been said, had met Sophia's lover when abroad.

There resided in Kettlewell a widow of good family and small fortune, by name Mrs. Hands; and Mrs. Hands, relishing the fat living of the house of Done, and the house of Done being

gratified by the aroma of aristocracy which hung around Mrs. Hands, there came about an alliance between the two, offensive and defensive, which was always most enthusiastically maintained on the widow's side about lunch and dinner hour. Mrs. Hands was a woman who had seen a great deal of the world, and could converse agreeably. She had a beautiful set of teeth which made her smile a great deal, and a jolly laugh which caused people to feel comfortable, and between the laugh and the smile she had a reputation for thorough good-nature. She was known in every house in Kettlewell; she carried gossip with the punctuality of a postman; she had broken off two matches by her solitary act and deed; she was a kind of parlour earthquake, making splits and fissures and shakings innumerable in hitherto stable households; and yet for all this the true character of Mrs. Hands was not suspected, and everybody said she was such a good-humoured woman that it was a pleasure even to see her. Which shows, reader, what can be done with a beautiful set of teeth, and a smile and a jolly laugh discreetly inserted in the talk now and then.

Mrs. Hands was no favourite with Mrs. Temple. That prudent woman, mindful of an enemy's craft and malice, never said what she thought of the widow; but she knew, and the widow knew. In her way, Mrs. Hands feared the superior and more scientific worldling, as was shown by the contraction of her smile and the reduction of her laughter whenever Mrs. Temple was by. But Sophia liked the widow and thought she had a good heart.

One morning, about four months after the Done episode, Mrs. Hands called on Sophia; and there was to be seen in her face a remarkable solicitude and depression, so much, that Sophia asked, after a little casual talk, if anything had disturbed her.

'Disturbed me!' the widow exclaimed. 'O Sophia, my heart is bleeding this morning!'

'For what?' Sophia asked. 'For anybody I know?'

'For yourself, dear girl. Now I will not keep you in suspense. Is it not true—I know it is true—that you are still in your heart keeping up with the clergyman's son, Percival Brent?'

Sophia turned as white as death. Two or three strange whispers about Percival had reached her ears from different quarters in the last three weeks.

'Have you any news of him? Is he ill?' she asked, and yet illness was not what she feared.

'Sophia, dear girl,' the widow said, regarding her with eyes that absolutely moistened—by what art or emotion I know not, nor could the widow have told herself—'Percival Brent is a bad young man—unworthy of you—unworthy of your love.'

'What do you mean?' Sophia asked, drawing herself up with a kind of proud rebuke, which yet had a threatening of tears in its very indignation. 'Nothing bad can be true of him.'

'Nothing good, Sophia,' the widow replied, shaking her head religiously. 'It is sad for me to tell it to you, but it is my duty, dear—and my privilege too; for who would see you sacrificed to such a fellow?'

'You must not talk so,' Sophia said. 'I can't listen to it.'

'Now wait, dear, wait,' the widow rejoined, with perfect temper. 'Hear me for two or three minutes, and then say what you please, or do what you please. My conscience will be clear.'

'Go on,' Sophia said, in a less resolute tone.

'In the first place, dear, he has not been succeeding in his trade—business, whatever you call it. He has lost everything—or the person with whom he was in partnership has lost everything, or has died, or something unlucky, anyhow—Brent is nowhere at all in money matters.'

'That he cannot help,' Sophia said, and her heart revived.

'Perhaps not, dear. But he could help being idle; being fond of fast company; being fond of drink—or, at least, of being at places where people do drink, and all that sort of thing. This has been his ruin; for ruined he is.'

'I don't see much in what you say,' Sophia replied. 'Whenever a young man fails in life, people are ready to blame him, and ready to say, "What could you expect?" and all that.'

'Yes; but smoking, dear—drinking—fast society!'

'Well, he always smoked, and he always drank wine,' Sophia answered hotly. 'I suppose once he has taken a little too much, and of course spiteful people say that he drinks, and has ruined himself by it.'

Had she really spoken her whole mind she would have said: 'One offence he has never committed—he has not been false to me; and therefore his peccadilloes shall be forgiven.'

'Sophia, Sophia!' the widow exclaimed, 'there is more than that. How young you are to think such things ever go alone! Percival is—well, my dear, he is not over-particular about his morals, and that's the long and short of it!'

'Tell me all you know,' Sophia exclaimed, turning on her visitor almost fiercely, and with eyes that enforced an instantaneous reply.

'Well, then, my dear, he has been untrue to you.'

'Married!' Sophia gasped, 'to—to Bessie Warren?'

'Never heard *that* name,' replied the widow. 'And he is not married; but a great deal worse. He is well known out there for his liking for fast women, and he has made quite a

scandal of himself with an actress—a married woman, I believe, only her husband is in England, I am told.’

‘How do you know all this?’ Sophia asked. Her voice was scarcely audible; for she was now sure that her lover was false.

‘One of my little birds told me,’ the widow replied, with a jauntiness that sickened poor Sophia. ‘Forget him, dear. Be a girl of spirit. Treat him as he deserves.’

‘How do you know all this?’ Sophia repeated, putting her hand to her forehead and speaking in a tone of genuine anguish. ‘Tell me how you know it?’

‘Well, dear, if you must hear everything—and perhaps it is better—look here.’

The widow drew from her muff a newspaper, and opening it, pointed to a marked paragraph. The paper was an Australian one, and the paragraph, as will be seen, was composed with that engaging ease and lightness of touch which are characteristic of certain colonial journals.

‘CARRIAGE ACCIDENT IN THE SUBURBS.—Yesterday evening, as Percival Brent was driving Mrs. Lanigan to the theatre, after a pleasant lunch in the country, the horses ran away, probably having had too much Moët & Chandon—a beverage which, though it never affects the driver, is sometimes known to have an exciting effect on the steeds. After a wild career through the streets the vehicle was turned over close by the theatre, and the occupants thrown into the street; after which, lightened of their load, the inebriated animals proceeded to drag the vehicle to smash with amazing celerity. Young Percival got a heavy cut on the left temple; but Mrs. Lanigan, marvellous to tell, came off wholly uninjured. In spite of his bleeding brow, Percival was on his feet again in a moment, and, mindful of the poet’s advice, he went to Mrs. Lanigan’s side, “to take her up tenderly,” and “lift her with care.” The news of the accident and its happy termination soon spread in the theatre; and when Mrs. Lanigan appeared on the stage, the house rang with plaudits. Nobody thought of poor Percival; his countenance being of value to himself only, while Mrs. Lanigan’s is dear to the public.’

‘A word in your ear, dear,’ cried the widow, when Sophia had finished.

And she whispered something at which the poor girl’s cheek broke into a flame.

‘Now, Sophia,’ she said aloud, ‘have I not convinced you?’

‘I feel a little tired,’ Sophia answered. ‘I don’t know what to think just yet. If you will excuse me, and look in another morning, I shall be glad.’

‘Certainly, love,’ the good-humoured widow replied, not sorry to be free now that her work was done. ‘Don’t be cast down.

It is all for the best. You will soon get a husband. Think of Mr. Prendergast, or, better still, think of that excellent young fellow John Done. He is dying for you still; I am sure of it.'

'Look in another day,' Sophia said mechanically; and the widow took herself off.

Poor Sophia stood silent, just where Mrs. Hands left her, still holding the hateful paper which had stabbed her to the heart. She was numb and stupid with the blow. For this, then, she had loved and waited in uncomplaining constancy for nearly six years! Only to learn that her lover was a rake, satisfied and pleased with the caresses of a light dame like Mrs. Lanigan, unworthy of her affection, or the affection of any true woman! Had there been any excuse for him, even had it been the blaming of herself, gladly she would have pleaded it before her own judgment now. Had she been married to him she might have disappointed his expectation, and so driven him to other women for pleasure. Had they even been meeting occasionally she might not have been warm enough, charming enough; twenty excuses might have been urged on his behalf. Now the fault must be all his own. She had kept her vow, and had found the joy of her life in keeping it. If any doubt of him had crept into her mind at times she had rebuked it instantaneously. With her whole soul, morning, noon, and night, and with an almost religious punctuality, she had cherished his memory, encircling it with her warmest memories and her purest prayers. And here he was exchanging her love for the favours of an actress, who sold her smiles with as quick an eye to profit as a shopman sells his wares. The downfall of Sophia's hopes was complete. The most refined ingenuity could not have discovered a more perfect and total form of torture. Her whole life was turned into a wilderness. Her mother was right. Better live for the world, better marry for money, better lay hold of material comfort and the pleasures of sense and fashion. These had no power to break and crush the heart like lofty ideas refuted by reality, and devoted hopes crushed by hard fact. With all these thoughts whirling through her brain in a struggling crowd, Sophia stood on, stony and tearless, in the centre of the room, until suddenly the door was thrown open, and Mrs. Temple's maid came flying in with her cap disordered and dismay in every feature.

'Come, miss! come quick!' she called out. 'Come upstairs; missus is going on so queer! O, don't lose a minute, miss—not a minute!'

(To be continued.)

BOUND FOR 'THE OAKS.'

(Illustrated by Adelaide Claxton.)

DRESSED with true Parisian taste,
A slender figure, perfect waist,
 And *gants de suède* ;
A *point de beauté*, quite unique !
A touch of chalk upon her cheek—
It was so very warm that week—
 She stood arrayed.

Below we waited at her door, [four,
With neatly turned-out coach-and-
 And well-stocked baskets.
With voice as sweet as singing linnet,
She owns she's late, but begs 'one
 minute !' [pin it,
'Your veil, miss !' 'Goodness gracious,
 And lock my caskets !'

A rustle of a crinolette,
A 'How are you ?' a cheeky bet,
 She cannot climb up !
Dressed with goodness knows what
 on, [ten—
There's something still she had forgot—
A *mouchoir* worked with neat red cot-
 ton ;
 A joking 'Time up !'

At last she's seated on the box,
Showing her 'broidered shoes and
 clocks.
 Her feet grow tired
In high-heeled shoes with pointed toe,
As they were then—I ought to know—
But what cared she for pain, sir, so
 They were admired ?

She seemed delighted when I showed
Her all the humours of the road
 From coach to coster ;
She laughed as sings a pretty bird,
She never seemed to weigh a word,
And owned she never even heard
 Of Bright or Forster.

It seemed to me as if she'd been
From Dan to Beersheba, and seen—
 I dare not doubt it—
Paris, Venice, Naples, Rome,
St. Peter's and its famous dome :
She talked of everywhere but home
 And all about it.

Our souls were full of summer wea-
 ther,
When she and I first sat together
 At that race-meeting.
She made the running fast for me—
A rank outsider I, and she,
The favourite, ran together : we
 Got such a beating !

She laughed and chaffed at my ex-
 pense,
To beggars threw my surplus pence,
 And cracked old jokes.
She danced and rode—played cards,
 they say—
I've never seen her since that day.
If you go down, like me, you may,
 At this year's Oaks.

Our hearts were all we had to stake ;
That Diamonds turned up seemed to break
 Her heart in her.
She won a selling-race, I hear,
At just 'the back end of the year,'
And recommends her husband's beer
 To every partner !

AUGUSTUS M. MOORE.

LADY STUDENTS AT CAMBRIDGE.

Girton College.

PROBABLY most of our readers sometimes look at that section of the newspapers devoted to University intelligence. They may have some special interest in perusing the lists of the successful, and they will have noticed within the last few months an addition to those lists which appear under the heading 'Cambridge.' At the end of the ordinary list appears a second and smaller one, headed 'Women,' or more often 'Females,' and after the name of each candidate the word Girton or Newnham. Girton and Newnham are the colleges at which these ladies have studied, and as names they are probably known to most of our readers. We propose to tell them something more about the life that is led there, and about the studies, whose fascination attracts so many women to Cambridge. Girton is the older of the two institutions, though not by many months. While the college was building a house was taken at Hitchin, and here the first lady students, since reverentially called by their followers the 'Girton Pioneers,' commenced their studies. But these studies were attended with many difficulties, for the distance from Cambridge was too great to allow of sufficient communication; indeed this was only looked upon as a temporary home, to be occupied till the permanent one was ready. The present building was opened in 1873; but it has been several times enlarged since then. It now forms two sides of a square; but

it is hoped that some day, when the number of students is doubled, the square will be completed, and the collegiate quadrangle attained. It is situated about one and a half miles out of Cambridge, in what is now known as the Huntingdon-road, but was originally the Via Devana of the Romans. Those indefatigable road-makers would indeed have been surprised could they have had a vision of the use their road was to come to: of lady students going to and fro between Girton and Cambridge, to attend lectures or do shopping, or, still stranger perhaps, of lecturers going out to Girton on that most modern of vehicles, a tricycle.

The college, with its red-brick walls, as yet but too scantily covered with creepers, is a striking object on this lonely country road. The front windows face south, the side windows east, and all look out on to the grass-plots in front, which, from one o'clock till dusk, are never long deserted by the lovers of the noble art of lawn-tennis. The college has two stories; on the ground-floor are the dining-hall, kitchen, lecture-rooms, and several sets of students' rooms. The dining-hall is on our right as we enter, a spacious apartment with a large bay-window, looking out on to another lawn-tennis court. Next to the dining-hall is a small reading-room, devoted to the use of students. Here the papers are kept, and most people stay in after lunch to read them and await the arrival of the second delivery of letters. Here meetings

are held; a notice-board is devoted to the use of the students, on which announcements about lost property, tennis-matches, meetings, &c., are posted. On the mantelpiece are several slates on which tennis engagements for the day are entered. A handsome bookcase contains some of the most honoured possessions of the college—the mathematical books used by Mrs. Somerville, which were presented by Miss Cobbe, together with a bust of their former owner. A small prayer-room on the first-floor contains some other treasures of a very different description. These are some Roman and Saxon antiquities found in the grounds of the college, among which are some peculiarly fine specimens of Samian ware and some Roman glass and beads.

A hospital has been added to the college, so arranged as to be entirely separate from the rest of the building. Hitherto it has fortunately never been employed for the purpose for which it was designed, but has been only used for college examinations. A laboratory is also attached to the building, where the natural-science students spend a great part of their days, performing strange rites with bottles and 'substances,' and whence proceed, at times, various unsavoury fumes.

The first and second stories, or middle and top corridors, as they are called, are almost exclusively devoted to students' rooms. Of these each student has two, a sitting-room and bedroom, which, in most cases, communicate by folding-doors. On the top corridor there are curtains instead of folding-doors, and though here the rooms are really single, yet the curtain arrangement allows a larger space for the sitting-room than the folding-doors; and besides,

these top rooms have charming little nooks and corners, which lend themselves to all manner of adornment, and are easily made so attractive in the eyes of their occupiers, that they do not care to evacuate them when they have a chance of doing so.

Emerson has said that the real advantage of University life is that of having a room and fire of one's own. Probably the Girtonians, as Cambridge custom calls the students, would be very willing to agree to this sentiment. To have a room of one's own means to be able to impress one's individuality on one's surroundings, and this most of the students do. The college provides furniture, which is of the same kind for all the rooms; yet individual additions and changes have gone far to give each little study a stamp of its own. In many cases the students have supplied the wall-paper, a great opportunity for displaying individual taste; often the college chairs have disappeared, to give place to some more comfortable form of lounge. Some of the musical students supply themselves with pianos, and others make use of those provided by the college in the hall and lecture-rooms. By an agreement among the students there is to be no music during certain hours of the day, so that the studious may not be disturbed.

The college supplies each room with a carpet, a writing-table, a cupboard and small side-table, and with everything that is required for a bedroom. Coals and candles are also provided—there is no gas in the building; in short, the college supplies all necessities, and in calculating the cost of residence the subject of furniture may be left out of the question.

Another great advantage, from

a pecuniary point of view, is that it is possible at once to estimate the total expense of a course of study at Girton. The cost is one hundred guineas a year, and this includes board, lodging, and lectures—in fact all necessary expenses except the books that students require for their own use. The college provides flies for driving to lectures at Cambridge—this is a great boon to those who are not good walkers, and is besides a great saving of time—and it is often possible for students who are going to Cambridge for other purposes to avail themselves of a vacant seat in a ‘lecture fly.’ It is unfortunate that the college is situated so far out of Cambridge, as it would on many accounts be pleasanter to be in the town; still there are some advantages in its country situation. The ground is higher than in Cambridge, and the situation healthier. Girton is unusually fortunate for this part of the country, in being situated on gravel instead of on clay, and the fields round about afford a pleasant, though often a very muddy, walk. Cambridge scenery is proverbially flat, and the top windows of the college, whence the spire of Ely Cathedral, seventeen miles distant, is distinctly visible, afford a good view, and reveal what peculiar charm this kind of country possesses.

It may be of interest to our readers to know something of the life that is led by the students at Girton. The plan is to have all the meals in the dining-hall: breakfast is supplied there from eight to nine, lunch from twelve to three, and dinner, which is, of course, a general meal, at six. Tea is sent to the students’ own rooms; about four o’clock the cheerful rattling of teacups is heard in the corridors, and announces the arrival of the servant

with a large trayful of cups. These trays are taken round to all the students’ rooms and also to the lecture-rooms, where the combination of tea and study forms a peculiar feature of Girton lectures. Four o’clock is an important hour at Girton, and one that is not willingly missed by students. Those who are absent from their rooms for a short time generally leave a notice on their doors asking for a cup of tea; and another notice that may frequently be observed when walking along the corridors is ‘Please see to my fire.’ ‘Engaged’ is also put up by busy students who are anxious not to be disturbed.

The morning hours are of course the best working hours: from nine to one is the usual working time, one being the favourite hour for lunch. Nearly all the lectures at Girton are given in the afternoon, and the hours between two and six are generally divided between lectures and tennis or walks. But most students have some completely free afternoons, which they can devote to expeditions into Cambridge or long country walks. Lectures in Cambridge are given in the morning, and to these the natural-science and history students go. Most mathematical and classical lectures are given at Girton.

Nine o’clock in the evening is the time which public opinion fixes as the right moment to leave off work. Of course this is not always possible, but as a rule it is the sociable hour, and the time for tea-parties. Trays with materials for tea, coffee, or cocoa, are sent round to the rooms, and as every one has a kettle of her own, tea can be taken at any time, and this is generally a social meal, which two or three friends partake of together, enjoying the luxury of leisure after work. Once

a week a practice is held by members of the choral society, who usually give a concert at the end of the term, to which friends are invited. There is also a debating society, and an institution peculiar to Girton, a ladies' fire-brigade, 'womanned' by the students, in Cambridge parlance. This was first thought of when some small fire-engines were presented to the college; and some of the students, after receiving due and formal instruction, taught the many details of pumping, passing buckets, carrying in mysterious knots, &c., to the rest. The institution continues to flourish and to hold weekly practices.

Girton, of course, has a reading-room club. The college provides some of the daily papers, and the students club together to buy other dailies, weeklies, and monthlies. A meeting is held once a term to vote on the papers that are to be taken. The *Athenæum*, *Spectator*, *Punch*, the *Nineteenth Century*, and one or two others retain their position undisputed; others are now taken, now left, according to the disposition of the particular meeting. Some of the papers are bound at the end of the year; most are sold by auction at the end of the term, when it often happens that in the excitement of the moment some particularly popular or amusing paper is sent up to a figure beyond its original price.

The usual length of residence at Girton is three years, or sometimes a little longer, depending on the line of study taken up. Students are not obliged to reside for the three years, but unless they do so, they are not entitled to receive a certificate. The year is divided into three terms of about eight weeks each, corresponding to the University terms, and it has lately been arranged that

those students who desire to do so can come up for some weeks during the Long Vacation. There is, of course, an extra charge for this, but the cost of residence in the 'Long' is somewhat lower than for the ordinary terms.

Most students read for what are called the tripos or honours examinations; but until quite lately the ladies' colleges were not formally acknowledged by the University, and though the students had the benefit of University teaching, they could not claim the right to join in the degree examinations. This privilege was, however, almost always accorded them through the kindness of the examiners, who undertook to look through the answers to the questions set, and report what the place on the list of the candidate would have been had she been formally examined. After this had been done for some years, the number of students at both Girton and Newnham increased so much that it became advisable to make some definite arrangement about these examinations, as it did not seem any longer desirable that so large a number of students should have to depend on the favour of individual examiners. Several memorials to the Senate of the University were therefore drawn up, begging them to admit women formally to the examinations, and the result was that, after much discussion, some proposals in favour of the women were drawn up, and passed by a large majority of votes. It was agreed that they must conform with the same regulations as undergraduates in regard to keeping terms, that they must pass what is popularly known as the little-go examination or an equivalent, and that they should on these conditions be admitted formally to the tripos

or honours examinations, that their names should be published in a separate list, and their place in the class indicated. No provision was made for admitting women to the examinations for the ordinary degree, nor did the University agree to confer the title of B.A. upon them; but it does grant them a certificate which is really an equivalent. The formal conferring of degrees on women, a step already gained in London, has yet to be attained in Cambridge; but there are hopes that if the institutions there continue to be as successful as they have hitherto been, and the women to occupy as prominent a place in the lists, even the day of 'girl-graduates' cannot be far distant.

The most popular subjects of study at Girton are the time-honoured classics and mathematics; and although the more modern studies of natural science and history have also found many adherents, it has hitherto been in mathematics that Girton has achieved its most brilliant triumphs. At Newnham natural science and history have been most successful.

Before admission to the college, students are required to pass an entrance examination, unless they have already passed some other similar examination, which exempts them from it. Such are the senior local examinations and the matriculation of the London University. In connection with these entrance examinations scholarships are awarded. Most of them are due to the munificence of private benefactors, or of the rich City companies, whose generosity in regard to educational purposes has of late rivalled their wealth. Most of the scholarships are awarded for general success in all the subjects of the examination; some are given for special

subjects; and every four years a scholarship of eighty guineas a year for four years is given for proficiency in classics. Students are not admitted under eighteen years of age.

In thus fully describing Girton and Girton life, we have made it unnecessary to give as detailed an account of Newnham. There are, of course, differences in the constitution of the two colleges, partly because they were founded with different aims. The aim of Girton was from the first what it still is: to supply for women a similar University training to that enjoyed by men. Newnham had at first more modest aims, and was started merely to afford a home for women who came from a distance to attend University lectures, without imposing any restrictions with regard to length of residence or examinations. After a time, as the institution increased, its students also became candidates for the triposes; and soon a second hall had to be built, and in 1880 the two were incorporated as Newnham College. It is still possible for students to come to Newnham only for a short time; many reside for a year only, and merely qualify themselves for what is known as the Higher Local Examination; nor is it compulsory to read for any examination at all. The charges are more moderate than at Girton, being only seventy-five guineas a year for board, lodging, and lectures; but each student has only one instead of two rooms of her own.

Newnham College is situated in Cambridge itself; a little turning to the right, just at the end of the long line of college gardens, leads to two large red-brick buildings, known as the South and North Halls, and these together constitute the college. Very new these buildings look to those who

have just passed by the beautiful college gardens, and gazed with admiration on the old gray buildings, so charmingly set off by the fine old trees and grass that suggest spring at all seasons of the year. Newnham and Girton have no past to recount like these vener-

able buildings, but let us trust that they may have a future; and those who have followed the fortunes and success of the colleges so far will be content to wish that the end may be worthy the beginning.

SUNSHINE AND CLOUD AT TENNIS.

'To be wroth with those we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.'

It was only a game of tennis;
How could I be so put out?
But something possessed the balls, dear,
The way that they bounced about!

I ran up to *your* balls, and missed them,
Then pouted when *you* took *mine*;
And took it to heart when you told me
I'd better stop *outside* the line.

'You don't understand the science';
What wonder, when *you* were so near?
Love's science is all too absorbing
To leave room for another, dear.

The balls came so fast and so furious,
I *never* was in the right place;
The ground was as hard as a rock, dear,
And the sun shone right in my face.

And Lucy and Charley were laughing,
'Let's polish them off while they fight!'
You know how I *hate* to be beaten;
But beaten we were, and outright.

Some tears were very near falling
As I buttoned my boots awry,
And struggled into my jacket,
Scorning the help that was nigh;

Fearing to glance at you, darling,
As I hastily left the field ;
Knowing the might of love, dear,
Fearing that wrath might yield.

Of course I meant you to follow ;
But when I turned my head,
You had climbed the steep, and taken
The road to the town instead.

O that weary homeward journey !
O those girls ! how their chatter jarred !
For a cloud was over my sunshine,
And life's sweet harmony marred.

' Shall I see him again, I wonder ?'
I wandered into the wood :
In the glow of a golden sunset,
All in white still, there you stood.

A few months ago, my darling,
I could have passed you by
With a careless nod and greeting,
And coldly averted eye,

And nursed my wrath till to-morrow ;
But *now*, as the minutes take flight,
I feel that I could not exist, dear,
Without making it up to-night.

For minutes empty of love, dear,
If we only could count the cost,
Are so many sunbeams wasted,
Are so many joys that are lost.

One glance into eyes forgiving,
One kiss, and the cloud is past :
Life is far too short, my darling,
For a tiff like that to last !

MINNIE.

ON THE LOST ARTS OF CONVERSATION AND LETTER-WRITING.

I AM afraid there is much reason to believe that conversation and letter-writing will shortly be numbered among the lost arts; that, indeed, to a considerable extent, they are lost arts already. This may seem a somewhat bold statement at the present day. Mr. Fawcett gives us periodical orations on the prosperous statistics of the Post Office, from which it is clear that the correspondence of the country is in a most voluminous condition. Moreover, it is clear that this is the great talking age. Eloquence is gone; but talk remains. From every local board and vestry, to the biggest vestry of all, the House of Commons, there are floods of talkings. But for the most part it is what Lord Beaconsfield calls the 'chatter of irresponsible frivolity.' Such old adages as 'Talk less and say more,' 'When you have nothing to say, say nothing,' have become obsolete and disregarded. We do not, perhaps, talk so much at home as people do on the Continent. There it seems to be chatter, chatter, chatter, all day long. We are astonished at the volume and rapidity. We wonder whether the constant stream of talk is ever fed at the source by anything in the way of reading, reflection, and observation. In this, as in other respects, we are constantly approaching the worst Parisian models. Of course I am not speaking of the best *causerie* of the *salon*, but of the constant unmeaning chatter that is to be heard on every side. But this is no more real conversation than

the tearing of raw flesh by the Terra del Fuegians would be recognised as dining by Ude or Brillat-Savarin. Similarly, the immensity of correspondence does not prove the existence of letter-writing. I know a man who has his letters delivered to him literally by the cart-load. The Post Office authorities cheerfully allow him to send down his own cart for his letters. He has a staff of about fifteen clerks to sort and answer them. Only about half a dozen letters come into his hand; and of the whole half dozen there is perhaps only one that is worth calling a letter. We live in an age that rejoices in quantity. The deterioration of conversation and letter-writing has been constantly going on. It has become much worse within a measurable period. I have known good letters and good talk, which, within the last decade or two, have become totally extinct, or at least are upon the inevitable eve of becoming so. There is, therefore, much reason to fear that, if the destructive process continues unabated, we shall have to add those of writing and speaking, not absolutely, of course, but considered as branches of the fine arts. They are in the state of 'going, going,' before the final 'gone' of the hammer.

Certain arts there are that seem already to have perished. We may say that memory itself, as a fine art, has passed away. Where are those who, like the Rhapsodists of old, could repeat the whole of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* at a sitting? The art of

painting glass can only be feebly imitated by us moderns. This summer I was looking at some of the oldest glass in England in Tewkesbury Abbey, and some of the oldest-painted glass in France at the cathedral of Chartres; and where will ever such glass be produced again as that of six or seven centuries ago? There is a particular purple dye which seems absolutely lost without hope of recovery. The fine art of pigments seems to be almost lost. Look at the Turner and Claude that hang together, according to Turner's request, in the National Gallery. The Claude is almost as fresh as yesterday, while the Turner seems at least three hundred years old. What is called the Samian pottery appears to be a lost art. At Caerleon-upon-Usk, and many old Roman stations, there is this old perished pottery found, surpassing the science of the present day in closeness of grain and beauty of polish. Where is the secret of building like the Pyramids, if all is true of the Pyramids that Mr. Piazzi Smith asserts about them? In the same way conversation and letter-writing, considered as fine arts, show a lamentable decadence everywhere, and are totally lost in some strata of society. Who now looks for letters like those of Cowper and Madame de Sévigné, which unite the highest literary finish with perfect naturalness? or such letters as those of Madame de Rémusat, most valuable when they are most open and unrestrained, as in those to her own husband and son?

If one were asked to define what was the great charm of conversation, it would be easier to give a description than a definition. And even a description would fail in conveying that certain subtle essence and charm which in really

good talking we feel rather than define. We go to inspired wisdom for adequate similes, and we there read of iron sharpening iron, and of face answering to face as in water. There are two special ingredients in all good talk, without which conversation may be an intellectual exercise, but is devoid of a spiritual tone. These are silence and sympathy. The secret of true companionship is that you are permitted not only to speak, but to keep still. Your conversation will not be mistaken for intellectual fence; your silence will not be misconstrued for stupidity or indifference. You venture to pause, that you may follow the train of thought that has been aroused, or to shape the argument or example that is lurking within the mind. If you pause, though simply for the purpose of gathering in the features of a landscape or of a room, this too may be a help for our curiously adjusted mind. Above all, we ought to have perfect rest and affiance in the sympathy of our companion. The silence and sympathy are to conversation what shadow and foliage and the sound of falling water are to scenery. What makes women, perhaps, the best talkers of all is this spiritual and moral element, the tact, the good taste, the grace, the quick-witted apprehension, and the delicate raillery. These things confer the true artistic touch in conversation. Plato, in his wonderful conversations, the Socratic Dialogues, always gives his subject a fringe of graceful wit and poetical illustration, but beneath the shell there is invariably a very hard nut to be cracked. Arthur Helps, in his *Friends in Council*, has adroitly introduced a lady, with the effect of considerably lightening the dialogue. In many works of a philosophical nature the employment

of a dialogue form is most advantageous. It enables a subject to be viewed on every side and in every shifting aspect, and gives the side-lights and undertones which can never be fully exhibited in any other shape. Dialogues of this kind actually occur, and are not only the wire-worn efforts of authors in their study. A metaphysical author of great repute, in a preface to a well-known book, thanks a distinguished man for the light and aid that had been afforded to him in the course of conversation during long walks. A case in the law-courts or a debate in Parliament are only extreme instances of a very arduous kind of conversation. One may reverently say that the conversation which involves sympathy, intelligence, generous appreciation, approximates to what is called the communion of saints. We bring away not only the impressions of fact and force of thought, but the intonation of voice, the witchery of smile or sigh, the friendly clasp of hands, and the spirit-kiss of related intelligences.

It is this kind of conversation which is greatly deteriorating in England. At no time did we greatly excel in it. 'Neither our language nor our temperament,' says Lord Houghton, 'favours that sympathetic intercourse where the feature and the gesture are as active as the voice, and in which the pleasure does not so much consist in the thing communicated as in the act of communication; and still less are we inclined to value and cultivate that true art of conversation, that rapid counter-play and vivid exercise of combined intelligences which bears to the best ordinary speech the relation that serious whist bears to "playing cards," and which presupposes, not previous study, but the long and due preparation of

the imagination and the intellect.' Lord Houghton has a suggestive remark on 'the inevitable frivolities that wait on large companies of men, or the moral and intellectual condescensions which great popularity in the social as well as in the political world demands.' He relates that when Pozzo di Borgo visited an English house he would draw the last arrived foreigner into a corner, and say, 'Viens donc causer; je n'ai pas causé pour quinze jours.' Madame de Staël said that *un esprit de sociabilité* existed in France from the highest to the lowest, but in England this is chiefly noticeable from its absence. As Novalis said, 'every Englishman is an island.'

We may be able to give some approximate reason for the decline of those delightful arts which once had a greater amount of existence among us than Novalis might have credited us with. First, the grand old leisure of other days has departed and fled. Moreover, talk has become a marketable commodity, and men prefer rather to listen than to speak. Our great men distrust mixed audiences; their speeches may be repeated, or, worse still, they may be distorted. Tennyson's words are quite true:

'When all his warm heart, sherris-warmed,
Flashed forth in random speeches,
Ere days that dealt in *ana* swarmed
With literary leeches.'

It is not pleasant for a man to find his own remarks served up in a mutilated or disguised form in another man's diary. No doubt there are persons who would feel greatly pleased and flattered if their random remarks, when possessing real shining ore, should be gathered up and carefully edited. Johnson knew of his Boswell's proceedings, and no doubt was both secretly and

openly pleased with it; and the conversations which Mr. Nassau Senior has so faithfully recorded with the great people whom he met at great houses have the merit of popularising and elucidating their views, and shedding much serviceable illustration on their characters and careers. I imagine that few of his personages would quarrel with these records; and it is very probable that in most cases they were not published without the full assent and privity of the persons concerned. But people become shy when other people, without tact or taste, or the necessary literary qualifications, and without asking any permission, are bent upon compiling the literary *ana* which our age so persistently demands, and of which it of course obtains a corresponding supply. Another reason for the present thinness, both of quantity and quality, may be mentioned. The immense mass of printed literature which is ushered into the world every day cuts the ground from under a good deal of conversation and letter-writing; or rather, we might say, are conversation and letter-writing shaped in a particular way and directed into this new channel. The people who are best able to talk and best able to write address their remarks to the multitude instead of to their friends. They find that their time and their pen possess a marketable value at the current rate of exchange. Hence it happens that those who might be supposed best able to write and talk, often do so comparatively little; and hard thoughts are sometimes directed towards them by their friends, who think that they do not take up the ball that is tossed to them with sufficient alacrity.

But to a man who writes much

the writing of letters frequently becomes an intolerable burden. It threatens to become the last straw that breaks the camel's back. Similarly, the man who has been incessantly talking abroad cannot stand much of it at home. I know a great man whose life is spent amid contending voices, and he has been obliged to adopt double windows and double doors that he may insure absolute rest and silence. There are some men who, even in this workaday practical world, have the golden gift of leisure, who have no imperious demands on their time, or, at least, who manage their time so well that they are not obliged to sacrifice private friendships to public purposes. Macaulay was an instance of this. It seemed almost indifferent to him whether he was addressing a friend or addressing a multitude, whether he was writing to a friend or writing for immortality. A remarkable example of this may be seen in the *Edinburgh Review* (October 1881). In an article on M. Circourt there are several letters from Macaulay to M. Circourt, written to disabuse his mind of some popular errors respecting the British occupation of India. Many people derive their impressions respecting India from the late Mr. Cobden, who was so extremely peaceful in his views, that he wished that his countrymen did not occupy a single acre in the East, and who looked upon our Volunteer movement with horror and detestation. The notion which M. Circourt shared with Cobden was, that we had gained our Empire by violence and fraud. In some brilliant letters, which might easily be cut up into leading articles for the *Times*, Macaulay exposes the ignorance and injustice of this idea. It must have cost him a good

deal of time from the composition of his History to write them; and his only motive seems to have been that his beloved England should not suffer in the estimation of an 'enlightened foreigner.' Macaulay had a true bull-dog attachment to England, which will always endear him to his countrymen, except those who vote that the rose is only a vegetable, the human heart a bit of muscular tissue, and patriotism only an enlarged kind of local prejudice.

The commonest errors in spoiling the art of conversation are the talking too little or too much. On the one hand there are the people—for whom, in comparison, I entertain a greater degree of sympathy and respect—who talk very little. This is occasionally the case to an extent which is ludicrously exaggerated. They apparently confine themselves to monosyllables. They seem to think with the misanthrope that conversation is the bane of society. Turning into the byways of anecdote, I may mention a curious instance that is recorded of a man who wished to be hermit and misanthrope by deputy. This was the Hon. Charles Hamilton, who, in the time of George II., laid out at Cobham the famous grounds celebrated by Grey and Horace Walpole. Among other pretty things which he erected on his grounds was a hermitage; and he took it into his head that he would like to have a real live hermit to inhabit it. He accordingly advertised for a hermit, and offered seven hundred a year to any one who would lead a true hermit's life, sleeping on a mat, never suffering scissors to touch his beard or his nails, and never speaking a syllable to the servant who brought his food. A man was found for the place; but after three weeks he had enough of it,

and retired. It is hard to see what good his seven hundred a year could have done him under such conditions. Still there are people whose tone of mind is essentially of a hermit-like condition. Keble says of all of us, 'Our hermit spirits dwell and range apart.' One meets with people whose social powers have died out from sheer disuse. They sometimes become sardonic in their monosyllables. They put in Burchell's 'Fudge' to most remarks they hear. They do not think it their duty to contribute any *épanouissement* to the social picnic of conversation. Apparently they regard us poor trivial talkers as being extremely shallow; and perhaps remind us of the saying that 'speech is silvern and silence golden; speech is human, silence is divine.' For myself, I like the silvery sound of really human speech. It is just possible that these sublime beings do not talk for the simple reason that they have nothing to say. One remembers Coleridge's story of the man in the coach, whose dignified reserve, thoughtful face, and massive brow, he regarded with mute admiration. The great being said nothing until they went in to dine at an hotel ordinary, when he plunged his fork into some potatoes and exclaimed, 'Them's the jockeys for me!' Unquestionably one often meets with people who are quite painfully shy and reserved, feelings which are quickened by their own knowledge of their defects. Addison was a notoriously poor talker. He himself knew it; but he also knew how much he had to set off against this deficiency. 'I haven't got ninepence in my pocket,' he said; 'but I can write you a cheque for a thousand pounds.' Goldsmith 'wrote like an angel, but talked liked poor Poll.' I know people

who possess an astonishing genius for repartee. But unfortunately it takes them a good many hours to prepare their repartee; and their answer is only ready when it is literally a day too late. Of course there are people who resemble those familiar birds of our childhood, that, unlike the birds of Aristophanes, can sing, but won't sing, and should be made to sing. They can talk, and they ought to talk, and they should be made to talk. Indeed, there is one class of men whom I confess I regard with some measure of suspicion and dislike. They are a peculiar race of listeners. They make it a point of hearing as much, and saying as little, as possible. They are the suckers of other men's brains; or, as Disraeli said of Peel, the burglars of other men's intellects. They pick up the floating opinions of clubs, and the talk of the Lobby. I myself have read a letter from a man who, if I named him, would be recognised as a man of character and genius, who offered his services to the party in power as one who could disseminate or pick-up 'rumours.' I could hardly have believed it, unless I had read it with my own eyes. Such a matter would only be possible to those who make politics a game of faction and self interest. These are the men who make the party leaders aware of the feelings of members, and enlighten members respecting the opinions of their constituents. They largely influence the press, and especially the daily newspapers; and the outcome of the leading article is frequently the mere echo of the listener's version of the tone and talk of society.

A very good story is told of an eminent Oxford professor who at one time had very considerable influence over the minds of many

of the young men of the University, and was supposed to pursue a Socratic method in eliciting the dormant powers of young men. The professor knew how to be silent, and also how to talk, especially in the *salons* of the great and wealthy. One day he invited a promising undergraduate of the great intellectual college to take a walk with him. The young gentleman was slightly flustered with the honour of the invitation, and was prepared to pick up any golden grains of truth which might be let fall on his account. They walked out as far as Iffley, but to his great surprise a stolid silence was consistently maintained by the mighty being whom he was prepared to accept as his guide, philosopher, and friend. At last, as they turned back from Iffley Lock, the undergraduate ventured to observe, 'A fine day, Professor.' The Professor vouchsafed no reply, but strode back silent into Quod, and the young fellow did not have strength of mind to renew his attempt. As they entered beneath the archway the Professor fixed his keen philosophic glance upon him, and mildly said, 'I did not think much of that remark of yours.'

Let us now take the converse case. Conversation is the social salad, and there are frequently people who mar it by putting in too much of a single ingredient. The secret of the proper combination thus becomes almost lost: the overdone item is with these people their own personal talk. They love the music of their own voices. No social oratory is so perfect as their own. And it is wonderful how they talk. The limpid stream flows on like some freshet in a gutter. These voluble talkers are generally those who have the least to say. Their talk

to a great extent consists of frivolities and personalities. People talk of the scandal-mongering of small towns and villages, and think that this at least is an evil from which the great communities of London and Paris are exempt. But the case is nothing of the sort. The evil is not of locality, but is radical to human nature. They do not gossip in the same street, but they gossip in the same set. Monologue has always a most unfavourable effect on conversation. Sometimes it is intensely interesting, but oftener still it is immensely the reverse. Any one ought to forgive the monologues of Coleridge or Macaulay. But even those who have listened to Coleridge have described his conversation to me as being exceedingly prolix and tiresome, an impression which Carlyle in his *Reminiscences* abundantly shared; and Sydney Smith congratulated his friends that Macaulay, after his return from India, had displayed some brilliant flashes of silence. 'He overflows with learning,' said Smith on another occasion, 'and stands in the slop.' Once Sydney called him a 'book in breeches.' Sometimes we listen with the greatest interest to the monologue of the lion of a dinner-party. It is some traveller who gives us choice matter which he has omitted to print in his book, or which he thought it judicious to withhold from the public eye. It is the biographer who has represented his hero as an angel upon earth, but who will interest his friends in confidential talk by detailing the weaknesses and eccentricities of the man, and so giving a life-like description of him. But even here 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' While the grand talk goes on, some insipid nonentity will make some obvious re-

mark that death is extremely certain, or interrupt to quote some item of news from the papers with which every one is acquainted. The monologue of very great people may be pardoned, but even in their case it is often a mistake. There is the well-known story against Madame de Staël, who was delighted with the conversation of a gentleman who had been introduced to her. It was simply her own conversation with which she was so delighted, for the gentleman to whom she had been introduced was both deaf and dumb. Very famous talkers might be mentioned who have found their listeners fast asleep, or they had ceased to listen and had stolen out of the room. These people have got their opinions cut and dried on every conceivable subject. Like Mrs. Wiltitterly they express an immense variety of opinions on an immense variety of subjects. I have got an idea that very few people are entitled to more than half a dozen opinions; by which I mean that they can hardly have half a dozen opinions really worth having, the result, that is to say, of their own independent judgment established on reasonable grounds. But there is no subject on which these flippant talkers will hesitate to pronounce authoritative verdicts. If they talk to a lawyer, they will kindly explain law to him; to a doctor, they will know more about medicine than he does; and they will kindly enlighten the parson about theology. They remind us of Merlin and Vivien:

'And smiling as the master smiles on one
Who is not of his school, or any school,
Save that where blind and naked Ignorance
Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,
On all things all day long.'

One reason for the comparative decline of conversation is that good talk, not to say tall talk, is

at a decided discount at the present time. It is an art that is falling out of conversation, because there is comparatively very little demand for it. It has ceased to be a social necessity. There was once a man who used to let himself out as a gentlemanly walking-stick to maiden ladies. They did not like to take their walks abroad without the protection of one of the baser sex, who was expected to offer mild and appropriate remarks in a subdued tone. There was also the man at Paris, who, when there were thirteen at a dinner-party, on the shortest notice was expected to make himself number fourteen, and exhibit all the social qualities of a valuable guest. This was also carried on in London, and was known to the initiated by the name of the Hiram Jones system. These humble useful vocations are gone, and with them the Yorick of the feast, whose jests and gambles 'set the table in a roar.' People don't go to dinner in order to talk. They are perfectly indifferent to the table being set in a roar, and can find better uses for it. They go in order to dine. Their criticism and observations are lavished on the *menu*. Their talk is about game and wine, politics and commerce, according to the nature of the 'shop' element, and scandal. A good murder case is something that everybody can talk about. It was the theory of Mandeville that private vices are public benefits. A man doesn't want information. He considers it an impertinence. He does not come to be instructed, but to eat and to drink. Anything that offensively interferes with the benignant processes of eating and drinking he avoids. The feast of reason and the flow of soul are a mere drug compared to the feast of venison and the flow of champagne. These are

the reasons of the banquet. And even when the banquet is nothing particular the intellectual habits of our time are hardly such as to lead people to appreciate a higher mental plane of talk. Society seeks its own level as surely as water, and the level is a watery one. It will not admit a severe mental strain, especially at hours of refection. It dislikes men who, like Edmund Burke,

'Went on refining,
And thought of convincing while they
thought of dining.'

I had a curious instance of this some time ago. I went to dine with a great man *en famille*. He was a man whose wit and learning must have been often appreciated by my present readers in some of the best contemporary literature of our day. What a pleasure it was to listen to the man! Anecdote, aphorism, criticism, flowed in a constant stream. How he exposed the fallacy of the last speech, the errors of the last leader, the misquotations of the last review, and out of his own abundant stores shed a flood of illumination on some anxious subject greatly occupying the minds of men! But the prophet, in the mean time, was without honour in his own country. The members of the family, the ladies especially, were simply bored and tired. They began and carried on their own conversation without the slightest reference to the host and master of the family. His voice was nothing more than the summer wind breathing through the room. His remarks fell totally unheeded, and did not evoke a single response. As a rule young people do not care for grown-up talk. In the same way grown-up people do not care for talk which is above 'their level best.' Most grown-up people would

hardly appreciate the great man, although his merits might be recognised at a select dinner at the Athenæum, or by the clever men who occasionally dine together at the Trafalgar at Greenwich. The same sort of thing occasionally happens with careful and clever letters. I have known some such letters sent to Paterfamilias, who has looked at them, and calmly said, 'I daresay it is very nice, but it seems rather long and very illegible. I will lock it up, and John shall read his letter to us himself when he comes home.' I am afraid that if John knew of this he would feel a little discouraged.

Doubtless there are houses where the tradition of good talk is as carefully kept up as that of good wine. We have had full accounts of the famous talkers of old, such as Luther, Selden, Coleridge; then we have the tolerably full accounts of later talkers, and even some glimpses of good talkers of the present time. Very wonderful has been the talk of Holland House; the talk at the houses of Miss Berry and Lady Ashburton, at Lydia White's and Lady Davy's; the wit of Sydney Smith; 'the rich outpourings of Lord Macaulay's infinite knowledge, or the picturesque and prophetic utterances of Mr. Carlyle.' Lord Houghton—from whose phrases I am quoting—and Mr. Hayward are among the best of our modern conversationalists. Sydney Smith could not make the smallest remark without provoking a laugh; and even when he said grace the young lady who sat next to him said, 'You always are so amusing.' I think it was Bishop Wilberforce who once made the remark that conversation at dinner-parties was losing in originality, and the best part of it was now made up of talk about new books and quota-

tions from early copies or proof-sheets in advance.

I once went to dine at the high table of a Cambridge college, where I was to meet with a professed conversationalist. In those days there were professional conversationalists, as at the present time there are professional beauties. I was told that this worthy man spent hours in his study every morning in qualifying himself to shine at the dinner-table and in the combination room. He had published a translation of German poetry at a time when German studies were voted heterodox at the tables of colleges. The subject which cropped up was Vienna, and of course several of the Fellows knew Vienna pretty well. But the curious thing was, that whenever the conversation might wander, it was always recalled by our well-read, well-bred friend to somewhere in the immediate vicinity of Vienna. Few men seem to have had a greater charm of conversation than Robertson of Brighton, whose *ἡμετέραν* still linger as traditions among those who know him. John Frederick Denison Maurice—he used to drop the John just as Dickens dropped all his Christian names except Charles—was a man who was known in the circle of his intimates as 'The Prophet;' and some of the best and most gifted men of the time used to hang on his accents as something preterhuman. No one ever lost the impression of that earnest face, or the vibrating tones of that tender sympathetic voice. I met Maurice on one occasion at a wedding breakfast. He proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom. The lady turned round, and in rather bad taste exclaimed, 'Now, Mr. Maurice, I call you to witness that I entertain no intention of obeying.'

Monsieur married, with his usual good sense. 'All, madam, you can know the importance of conversation,' he said, 'in marriage, where I married, just now, the only child of the art of conversation, and so the extreme on which conversation is made to depend. Here, Madam, is seated an art of the quarter, *Reine* on the left which, usually speaking, was much more interesting than the life itself. The King made a point of never taking the head of the table. He took care to sit on one side, which would give him a larger area for the purposes of conversation. He would not only have those on either side of him, but those exactly in front. He also took great care who should occupy these particular places, and what should be the subjects of the conversation. To a man of the Bishop's diplomatic turn of mind, the dinner would prove not so much a relief from business as the busiest part of the day.

Conversation and letter-writing are the mutual complement of each other, the obverse and reverse of the same thing. Conversation is the oral letter, and the letter the written monologue. Some persons hardly appreciate the importance of conversation. Yet every day experience may teach them that it has monetary value. You will find that it is a costly luxury to have a conversation, either short or long, with your doctor, and particularly, if long, with your lawyer. In course of time we all come to see the uses of method and economy in this great department of human life. Here, as elsewhere, it is possible to do our conversation wisely or stupidly. Here, as elsewhere, it is important to have a direct aim, and to proceed directly to it. Many a general correspondence has been carried on with a par-

ticular purpose. A correspondence has just been published at Paris between Benjamin Constant, who was once a member of the French Embassy at London, and Madame de Staël. It was a love correspondence, and the object of Madame de Staël was to 'let him down gently.' To quote her own words, 'in the course of a year and a half she brought him down to friendship.' The immense proportion of the world's talk in the way of conversation or correspondence is on love or religion. The conversation and correspondence are especially important when taken in combination. If we get our first and safest impressions from conversation, it is in correspondence that we obtain our most careful and deliberate survey. *Litera scripta manet* is the wisest of admonitory proverbs. There are few letters which, if skilfully interrogated, will not show more of the mind and character of the writer than the written page reveals. In these days of the abbreviation of all processes of labour, talk and telegram are doing much of the work of correspondence. Just as there are people who have an enormous correspondence, so there are people who have a great deal of talking to do, and whose talking is exceedingly important. There is a man whom I have in my mind's eye at the present time. He is the centre of great public interests. He is the manager of one of the greatest public companies in the world. As sometimes happens, all the responsibility of directors and committees has gradually shifted to his own shoulders. He has to speak often and very promptly; his word is law, and his behests are carried into immediate execution. Whatever drops from the lips of such a man is of the highest business moment. In a few words

he disposes of a matter that involves thousands of pounds. When the House of Commons was disputing one night over an item in the Estimates, a member remarked that he had often disposed of ten times the amount in one tenth of the time. Now this great man of business drops his weighty words everywhere as he goes about. He is constantly accompanied by two shorthand writers, whose duty it is to take down every word he says. I am afraid that, with all the multitude of words and with all the care used in transcribing them, there would be very little that, from a social and literary point of view, would be of much interest. The 'notes' would hardly do for 'general circulation.' I know a man whom I will designate as 'the special correspondent.' He cannot boast of two shorthand writers, but he is the happy possessor of one. When he takes his walks abroad in some foreign city, he utters lively remarks, suggested by things in general, which are promptly taken down by his faithful attendant. A little editing, a little form and finish, and his talk speedily appears in some paper that has the biggest size, or the biggest circulation, or, at least, has the biggest importance—in its own eyes—of the whole European press. I do not think, my friends, that our own random talk, though not confined within limits of business, would contain much that is better. 'What a continent of mud it is!' exclaimed Coleridge, after examining some voluminous work of expository theology. If our daily talk were all taken down in shorthand and read out aloud to us, I am afraid that in our most conceited moments we should own that it was but a sorry and vapid business. It would be a mere mud-bank, not a continent, but the beach at

very low water. Hardly twice in the twenty-four hours should we attain to the high-water mark.

Can something be done that we may retain or recover the lost arts? We speak of them as lost, although they still linger here and there. We speak of the sinking vessel as lost, although it has not yet dipped beneath the wave, and of the Alpine climber as lost, when he has missed his footing, before he has sounded the depths of the crevasse. Are not these arts well worth sedulous cultivation? When we talk or write, we have to consider the question not only of extent, but of intensity. There is an immense amount of talking and writing, on which too much attention cannot be bestowed, though it may only meet the ear or eye of a single individual. A man who wishes to persuade another to enter into a business partnership (limited), or to persuade a young woman to enter into another kind of partnership (unlimited), will think no time or pains thrown away in arguing in favour of his object. You ask the thorough advocate whether he would rather win the verdict of the dozen average British jurymen in the box or of the hundred thousand readers of the trial, and if he thoroughly enters into the genius of his profession he will unhesitatingly prefer the first. Any clergyman who has only a very scanty flock will feel persuaded that if he does real good to a single individual of the number, that is more than if his mellifluous accents flowed unavailingly over a mob of well-dressed miserable sinners; so true it is that

'Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And spread for ever and for ever.'

There is always an ethical element in conversation. There is one very pleasant trait recorded in Mr. Stopford Brook's *Life of*

Robertson of Brighton : 'In the drawing-room he would separate himself from those he liked best, to converse with and spend a greater part of the evening by the side of the most neglected, sacrificing himself to brighten a dull existence.' Perhaps his influence on society was more powerful, as more insensible, than his influence in the pulpit. I may observe, by the way, that I hardly know of any richer dearer letters, with such full outpourings of mind and spirit, than these letters of Robertson to his friends. Tennyson has something on the words 'which make a man feel strong in speaking truth.' There was that wonderful old woman, Hannah More, who is not to be put down as simply of the 'goody goody' kind, and who wrote plays for Garrick before she wrote tracts for the Somersetshire people. She had a great idea that she would like in her talk to do good to people, but, like a sensible woman, if she knew she was going to meet the person a second time, her simple object was to make herself as agreeable as possible on the first occasion. It is unavoidable that there should be an immense deal of fringe before one comes to the heart of a conversation. Often a call is regarded as a mere prologue to an invitation or epilogue to a feast. Such calls are often considered as being trivial in the extreme. This, however, need not necessarily be the case. The call, even of this kind, is not barren of good results if it enables us to cultivate neighbourly feelings and evidence a disposition for kindly offices. Here, as elsewhere, a little tact and consideration will help us. There is a very striking passage in the *Letters of Robertson of Brighton* which I will venture to transcribe : 'A long stupid visit is over. I

do believe that there ought to be more interest in humanity and more power of throwing oneself into the mind of every one, so that no visit should appear dull. An infinite Being comes before us with a whole eternity wrapt up in his mind and soul, and we proceed to classify him, put a label on him, as we should upon a jar, saying, "This is rice, this is jelly, and this is pomatum;" and then we think we have saved ourselves the necessity of taking off the cover; in truth, each having a soul as distinct in its peculiarities from all other souls as his or her face is from all other faces. This seems to have been one great feature in the way in which our Lord treated the people who came in contact with Him. He brought out the peculiarities of each, treated each one as a living man, and not as a specimen of a labelled class, like the stuffed giraffes, cassowaries, humming-birds, and alligators you see in museums. Consequently at his touch each one gave out his peculiar spark of light.' The waste of power in conversation is something like the waste of sunlight on the sands, or the waste of power in the tides. It is quite supposable that the sands, like the coal, may one day yield their 'bottled sunshine,' and in the coming age of electricity the enormous motive power of the sea may be utilised. If we could all get into the Palace of Truth there might at first be a little confusion in our talk, but it might be hoped that ultimately it would exhibit a little improvement. That was a philosophic being who said that he always made a point when he met a shoemaker of talking about shoes. Each person, as Robertson said, has his sparkle of light. The one thing to do is to get at the heart of a man and at the heart of a subject. *Approfondissez* is a

true motto. If our fellow human being is worth calling on, he is worth studying. It is not a bad plan to settle in your own mind definitely, or even make a note of, what you shall speak about. Even at the risk of being abrupt do not give up your subjects. It is to be borne in mind also that the effect of your call is not limited

by speech. There is a silent effective influence which, like dew or like shadow, never fails to attend every human personality. But, lest I should be thought myself to have transcended all decent limits either of conversation or of correspondence, I will here make a pause.

A SONG.

LEANED my own love from her casement,
Morn's early softness to greet;
Smiled on the sweet summer blossoms,
Worshipping low at her feet.

Wistfully wept the Narcissus,
'Ah! thou art fairer than I;'
Tenderly murmured the Jonquille,
'Let me gaze on till I die.'

'Be thou my sun,' prayed the Sunflower,
'Sun, which no shadow e'er knows;'
'Teach me thy grace,' sang the Lily;
'Give me thy blush,' sighed the Rose.

'Pluck me,' the Jessamine whispered,
'Make thy white bosom my home;'
'Give me one kiss,' cried the Daisy,
'One, ere the cold winter come.'

Then when the light of her beauty
Fell where I lingered apart,
Kneeling before her I faltered,
'Give me, my darling, thy heart!'

WALTER B. PATON.

'MAKE YOUR GAME!'

SOME years ago, when the boards of green cloth at Baden, Homburg, and other continental watering-places were still in full swing, I made the acquaintance at Spa of a very intelligent and agreeable Frenchman, or, as he might be more accurately described, cosmopolite, who regularly passed his summers at whichever of these lively resorts appeared to him most attractive for the time being, and, as it happened fortunately for me, had on this particular occasion selected for his temporary sojourn the above-named little Belgian paradise, the Casino (or Redoute, as it was then called) of which was presided over by M. Davelouis, commonly styled, on account of his extreme parsimony, *Daveliard*. My new companion was one of those peripatetic philosophers,

'Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes;'

'Who'd viewed men's manners, Londons, Yorks, and Derbys.'

He had been everywhere and seen everything, knew a smattering of half a dozen languages, and might have served as a reliable guide to most parts of Europe, including the highways and byways of our own metropolis. At one period of his life he had occupied the post of private secretary to an Emperor, and at another, when his funds were at low water, had been a constant contributor to the *Times*. His store of anecdote on every conceivable topic was prodigious, and even a commonplace story gained point and relish from his manner

of relating it; while on the subject most appropriate to the place where we were—the public gaming tables—his experiences, derived from personal observation, were to me, then a mere novice in such matters, peculiarly interesting. He played but little himself, and only by fits and starts, as the fancy prompted him, immediately desisting if fortune proved unkind; 'never back your ill-luck' was his motto, and he invariably acted up to it.

We had been talking one day of the autocrat of Homburg and Monte Carlo.

It is not surprising (he said) that so well known a millionaire as Blanc should have been constantly applied to for pecuniary assistance by unlucky players, whose requests for a sufficient sum to enable them to return home were usually granted, and by penniless adventurers, to whose supplications—not considering himself bound to be generous, except where the credit of his establishment was concerned—he invariably turned a deaf ear. Once, however, he was compelled in self-defence to depart from his usual principle of 'non-intervention,' as the following anecdote will show. Among the visitors at Homburg in the year preceding my arrival at Spa was a certain Count E., whose right to the title borne by him was, according to all accounts, to say the least contestable; and who, having lost at *roulette* what little cash he originally possessed, was at an early period of the season literally without a sou. A scheme occur-

ring to him by which he proposed to replenish his coffers, he repaired one evening to Blanc's private abode, and inquired of the servant in attendance at what hour in the morning he could see his master.

'Not before ten o'clock,' was the reply; 'monsieur is not an early riser.'

'That will be too late,' answered the Count; 'I am leaving by the first train, and must see him, as I have news for him which he will be glad to hear. So, as the matter presses,' he continued, slipping five louis which he had borrowed for the occasion into the valet's hand, 'I shall count upon your showing me into his bedroom when I come.'

This being agreed on after some hesitation on the servant's part, the Count withdrew, and, as eight o'clock struck on the following morning, was ushered into the luxuriously furnished chamber where M. Blanc was reposing. Carefully closing the door and bolting it, the Count advanced towards the bed, the occupant of which, aroused by his entrance, started up in surprise, and, recognising his visitor, asked what he wanted.

'My dear Blanc,' said E., composedly seating himself at the foot of the bed, 'I want ten thousand francs, and naturally come to you for them.'

'But,' stammered the other, still half asleep, 'you are aware, Count, that I am not at liberty to dispose of our funds without consulting my colleagues. Wait till this evening, and—'

'Not an hour,' interrupted the intruder; 'you have only to open your safe, and hand me the money. Will you do it? yes or no?'

'Impossible!'

'Very good; then I must take my measures accordingly.'

With these words he rose from his seat, drew from his pocket a strong nail and a hammer, and began to drive the former into the wall, as if about to hang up a picture. Blanc stared in utter amazement.

'What are you doing?' he gasped, stretching out his hand towards the bell-rope.

'Take care,' cried E.; 'if you touch the bell, as sure as you are lying there, I will strangle you before they have time to break open the door.'

Blanc glanced at the tall and powerfully knit figure before him, and shuddered.

'I don't understand,' he murmured.

'Don't you?' ironically retorted the Count. 'You see this nail? Well, I have a rope in my pocket, and I am going to hang you. Now, will you give me the money? No? very good;' and he went on hammering until the nail was firmly fixed in its place. Then, turning towards his victim, who was sitting upright in the bed trembling in every limb, he coolly remarked that, before proceeding to extremities, he would give him one more chance. Blanc, perceiving that matters began to look serious, thought it best to comply with the audacious demand; and, opening the safe, extracted from it a roll of bank-notes, which he handed to the Count, warning him at the same time that if he remained another hour at Homburg it would be at his peril.

'You may be perfectly easy on that score,' replied E., who had already pocketed the notes, and was on the point of quitting the room. 'Now that our little affair is settled, I have nothing to detain me here. Adieu, papa Blanc; when the nine o'clock train starts I go with it.' And so he did.

Somehow or other the story oozed out, and Blanc was terribly chaffed by his colleagues. 'I could have reconciled myself to the loss of the money,' he said long afterwards; 'but I cannot and never shall get over the nail in the wall!'

One more anecdote relating to this notorious personage, and we shall have done with him. When Garcia was at Homburg, carrying all before him by his extraordinary luck, the highest stake allowed at the *trente et quarante*—namely, twelve thousand francs—was raised in his case as an exceptional favour, and, at his own request, to sixty thousand, an arrangement which, far from benefiting the bank, proved a mine of wealth to the player, whose gains at one moment amounted to nearly two millions of francs. It was Blanc's custom two or three times in the course of the day to walk through the rooms, and see what was going on; and one afternoon, on his approaching the table where Garcia had just profited by a series of 'reds,' the latter, accosting him in a mocking tone, triumphantly declared his intention of despoiling the bank of its last florin.

'Monsieur Garcia,' coolly replied Blanc, leaning on his cane and peering at the Spaniard through his spectacles, 'you may be right, or you may be wrong; but I will tell you one thing. I have at the Banque de France a little income of three thousand francs a year invested in my name, and I will take good care that you shall never deprive me of that!'

Six weeks later, Garcia had lost every farthing of his winnings, and was obliged to borrow a few louis from the bank to enable him to return to Paris.

'Of all the questionable characters, and they are many,' observed

to me one day my French acquaintance, 'who frequent gaming-tables, none are more carefully to be avoided than the so-called, or rather self-styled, "professors." These worthies are almost invariably men who have been ruined by play, and from pigeons have become rooks; they are easily to be recognised at the *trente et quarante* by their close attention to the game, standing opposite the *croupier* who deals, and assiduously pricking their cards, but never, for the best of reasons, staking a sou. Their main object is to discover among the spectators some credulous tyro, blest with more cash than brains, to whom they may describe in the most seductive colours their infallible scheme for breaking the bank, and thereby induce him to confide to their tender mercies a certain sum, the larger the better, on their solemn assurance that it must be doubled in a single sitting; and this is precisely what happened to a young friend of mine at Baden a year or two ago.

'He was watching with great interest a pretty Russian countess who had been losing heavily for the last half hour at the *trente et quarante*, but who still continued to back her ill-luck without the slightest sign of emotion. Three times in succession she had staked on the wrong colour, and was hesitating what to do next, when my friend's attention was suddenly diverted from the game by an individual standing beside him, who—but I had better tell you the story in Gaston's own words. He was, he said, or seemed to be, in a state of considerable excitement, and, after excusing himself for addressing me, remarked, with reference to the countess, that it vexed him beyond measure to see money so foolishly thrown away. "Is it

not, monsieur," he went on, "the height of absurdity to persist in relying on chance, instead of on a safe and perfectly intelligible system? If I had played this deal, I should not have lost a single *coup*." "Why didn't you?" I asked innocently enough. "Simply because I had not sufficient capital," he replied. "My wife, who is mad after *roulette*, lost four thousand francs yesterday, and I was fool enough to let her have them. So, as it requires a hundred louis to carry out my system, I am obliged to wait until I receive a remittance."

'I looked at him attentively for the first time; he was tall, tolerably good-looking, and remarkably well-dressed, nothing in his appearance betraying the professional hanger-on, and curiosity prompted me to continue the conversation. "How much," I inquired, "do you generally gain on an average?" "Supposing that I begin with a hundred louis," he answered in a careless tone, "one day's play will double it; and if we put the week's winnings at fifteen thousand francs, we shall not be far out." "Have you any objection," I resumed, "to explain your system to me?" His eye brightened immediately, and after a moment's reflection, probably to satisfy himself as to my being worth the trouble, he took me aside, and, drawing from his pocket a well-thumbed memorandum-book, every page of which was completely covered with hieroglyphics doubtless intelligible to himself, but assuredly to no one else, proceeded to unfold his scheme. What with the technical terms employed by him, and the multitude of abstruse calculations, which only served to puzzle instead of enlightening me, I was as much in the dark at the conclusion of his explanation

as I had been at the commencement, and preferred from sheer weariness to accept at once his assurance of the infallibility of his system rather than listen any longer. Apparently, my bewildered looks convinced him that he had better change his tactics; for he suddenly stopped, and, affecting an air of *bonhomie*, suggested that, as I was a novice in such matters, it would be more prudent for me to refrain from personally attacking the bank, and to intrust him with a hundred louis, which he formally engaged to double at one sitting.

'Up to this time I had no serious intention of risking the money, and rather demurred at the proposal; all objections on my part, however, were speedily overruled by my new acquaintance, and in an unlucky moment I drew out of my pocket two thousand-franc notes, on which he eagerly pounced, and, before I could utter another word, had seated himself in a vacant chair at the *trente et quarante*, and exchanged them for gold. It struck me that the croupier who handed him the two rouleaux glanced curiously round the table, as if in search of the probable owner of the notes; but I was too much absorbed in my venture to think of anything else. Taking my seat on a sofa commanding a good view of the game, I watched my friend's proceedings with palpitating interest, and remarked that, although he seemed to stake his money somewhat at random, he never failed to prick the card that lay before him. I also noticed that he was, or pretended to be, troubled with a cold in his head, from the frequent use he made of his handkerchief; and subsequently ascertained that every time he replaced it in his pocket, three or four of my louis went with it.

Nevertheless, at the end of the first deal we were about five-and-twenty louis to the good; and, on my suggesting to him that it would be advisable to leave off, he so strongly combated the idea that I reluctantly allowed him to have his way, and returned to my seat. With the next deal, however, the tide of fortune turned; my representative's handkerchief journeyed as before periodically to and from his pocket, but his faculty for divining the right colour ceased altogether, and each successive *coup* made a fresh inroad on our rapidly decreasing capital. In vain he tried to reassure me by divers encouraging winks; stake after stake became the prey of the inexorable rake, and in less than a quarter of an hour the last louis—those naturally excepted which he had so carefully stowed about his person—was swept away. Rising from his seat with a perfectly unconcerned air he took me by the arm, and, pointing to the card in his hand, affirmed that in the course of thirteen years' experience he had never witnessed so extraordinary a run of ill-luck. "Come to the café," he added; "we shall find my wife there, and a glass of wine will not do us any harm."

"I assented mechanically, and found myself face to face with an elderly and most unprepossessing female sitting at a table, with a tumbler beside her exhaling a suspicious odour of rum. Exchanging a significant glance with my companion, she essayed to improvise a smile, while he briefly related what had passed, complacently adding that we should be more fortunate another day. Incensed beyond measure by his patronising tone, I told him in plain words that I should not require his services a second time. "You assured me," I said, "that

your system was infallible, and in less than an hour you have lost every farthing of my money. Had I known what your promises were worth—" "Monsieur," interrupted the hag with a look of withering contempt, "my husband has lost more than five hundred thousand francs belonging to other people, and this is the first time that any one has presumed to find fault with him!"

"Scarcely less dangerous," continued my friend, "are the light-fingered gentry who prowl about the tables, seeking to glean a stray coin which may have escaped the notice of its owner, and always ready to claim the money staked by others. Two years ago I happened to be at Monaco, and strolling into the play-room after dinner with a few louis in my pocket, put three of them on red, which came up. I left them on the table, and red came up again. While I was debating whether to risk another chance or not, an individual behind me stepped forward, and was in the act of appropriating the twelve louis, when I summarily stopped him by saying they were mine. "Quite the contrary, monsieur," he replied, with imperturbable *aplomb*; "they are mine." Fortunately for me, the dealer, who was doubtless acquainted with my opponent's proclivities, interposed, and at once settled the question by ordering him to withdraw, which after some show of reluctance he finally did. Meanwhile the red came up a third time, and my twelve louis became twenty-four. Satisfied with my evening's work, I was on the point of beating a retreat, when I felt a gentle tap on my shoulder, and turning round, beheld to my astonishment the identical claimant of a few minutes back, who with an expressive glance at my waistcoat-

pocket besought me to remember that he had brought me good luck after all. I am ashamed to say that I was more amused than irritated by the fellow's impudence, and tossed him a louis as I left the room.'

One afternoon, while we were lounging together in the Allée du Marteau, I asked my friend if he could instance many players who had been winners in the long-run. 'Hardly one,' he replied, 'simply because they never know when to leave off. Very few have the strength of mind to husband their capital and bide their time, like a worthy citizen of Strasburg I once met at Baden, who, after three weeks' sojourn in that delightful

paradise, confidentially warned a newly-arrived fellow-townsmen against the dangers of high play, adding that he himself had regularly tried his luck at *roulette* every day, and was already a loser of *fifteen francs*! I remember,' continued the narrator, 'being told by a countryman of mine at Monaco, the most sanguine believer in his lucky star I ever came across, in reply to my inquiry how fortune had treated him, that he had by no means abandoned his original idea of breaking the bank; "for," he said, "although I certainly did pawn my watch yesterday, I have still my studs and sleeve-buttons left!"'

CHARLES HERVEY.

THE CONVALESCENT COCKNEY.

THE air, the air, the open air !
 Its breath can lull the throb of care.
 To languor strength, to torment ease,
 Are wafted on the balmy breeze.
 With joy I quit my second-floor,
 And close with glee my outer door.
 No jot of past or present pain
 Afflicts me now. I'm out again !

For many a week, from day to day,
 While prisoned in my sheets I lay,
 I watched upon my chamber-wall
 The light and shadow rise or fall.
 This morn the sovran sun is bright ;
 No shadow comes to dim its light.
 The sky is all its own domain.
 Smile, kingly orb. I'm out again !

How yonder church recalls the time
 When yonder clock's recurring chime
 Told how the dreary day drew on,
 Or when the weary night was gone !

Just now it seems a boon so dear
To *see* the hours as well as *hear*.
There sounds a welcome in your strain ;
Ring, merry bells. I'm out again !

And I may rove, no matter where,
Through busy street or quiet square,
And greet, for just a little space,
My fellow-creature face to face.
I meet him healthy, strong, serene,
Quite unaware how ill I've been.
I'll raise my hat (he can't complain),
' Good-morrow, friend. I'm out again !'

The park of saintly James invites
This errant gaze to calm delights ;
There cows lactiferously mild
Give solace to the thirsty child.
There Phyllis and her Strephon stray,
And spoon the fleeting hours away.
Hail, happy nymph and happy swain !
Keep spooning on. I'm out again !

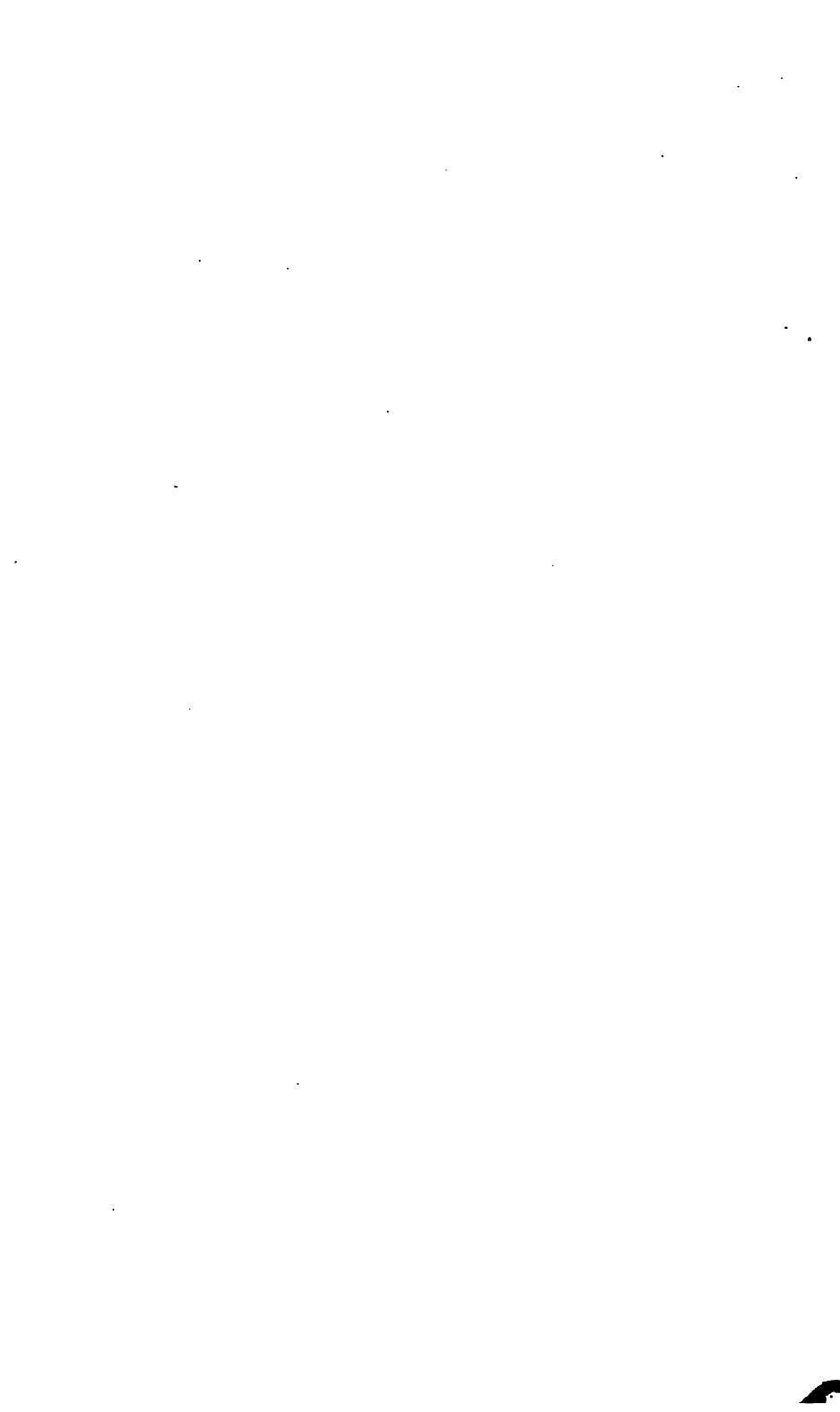
Nay, let me seek Trafalgar-square,
And woo the wanton zephyrs there !
(Undoubtedly 'twere better far
To call it Plaza Traf-al-gar.)
Here cherub-like aloft I see
Horatio Nelson, K.C.B. ;
Heroic visions fire my brain,
And stir my pulse. I'm out again !

But stay ! Did Fancy lead me forth
To ramble south or wander north ?
I cannot settle which were best,
A pilgrimage to east or west.
No matter ; journey where I may,
It can't be said I've lost a day.
I'm free as air—I've burst my chain ;
Hip, hip, hooray ! I'm out again !

HENRY S. LEIGH.



AN AESTHETIC FLIRT.





LONDON SOCIETY.

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AN ÆSTHETIC FLIRT.

PERHAPS because he was called Paul Clarkson, which, we must own, is a very romantic name, or perhaps because his family loved old china, or perhaps because he had five sisters and no brothers; from one of these causes, or from quite a different cause—what matters it, since the fact remains the same?—Mr. Paul Clarkson was without doubt an æsthetic flirt. How much of a flirt he was, perhaps he himself hardly realised; it all came so naturally to him. He was a handsome fellow, young Paul. He had a tall well-made figure, a pale but very expressive face, and a good deal of warm brown hair. No woman with such eyes could have kept from flirting; so let us not be too hard upon this man, especially as for some time he did no one any harm. He wrote poems, which his fair friends greatly admired. Ye gods, what sad poems they were! In them Mr. Clarkson flirted with Death just as he flirted with women. He sat at her feet, and called her pretty names. If his stern mistress had turned round sharply, and made him take her for better or worse, I hardly imagine he would have been a very willing bridegroom; but as the grim lady just then seemed to want none of him—as lungs, liver, and heart were all they should be—this verse-flirting with death was all very nice.

Mr. Paul was apparently very much distressed at having to live. He wanted no good dinners, not he; he wanted no books—of course not; he wanted no club; he wanted no pretty women to flirt with. What in the world did he want, then? He wanted to be absorbed into the spirit of things; he desired to grow part of the infinite; he yearned to be mingled with the heaven's blue, or to be a rose-leaf, or a cloud, or a sunbeam, or a weed; in short, anything but what he was. A very sad man was Mr. Paul Clarkson. Being so sad, was it not natural that he should turn for sympathy to the softer sex? One friend could not have satisfied his great nature; his comforters were many. Let us see now who they were.

To begin with, there was Miss Blandon, very strong on the question of women's rights—a clever, handsome, if somewhat masculine-looking, woman, of whom men mostly stood in awe. Clarkson found out a tender place in her heart, and walked into it. I think she thought for quite a long time that he was going to ask her to be his wife.

Then there was the beautiful Miss Sanford, with the pale face, and the large, lovely, sad-looking eyes; was she not beauty itself, and, as such, should she not be worshipped?

Then there was Mrs. Clifford,

quite young, and very nice to look at, too; and she wrote poems almost as sad as Mr. Clarkson's own. Her marriage had been a great mistake. She was thrown wholly away on the commonplace Clifford; so she resigned herself to the writing of melancholy verse. O bards, bards, what would you be without your griefs! Even as children are who have no pretty playthings.

Mr. Clarkson's grief was that he had once been engaged to a girl of whom he was really getting rather tired, when in the most unexpected manner she got tired of him, and threw him over, and endowed him with a wrong. Mr. Clarkson felt very badly, or said he did. It is quite impossible to say what he did not get out of that grief of his. Of course its prime use was as a seasoning to his poems. Then it was a great help in those nice flirtations I have spoken of. A man with blighted affections may go much further in flirting than a man who is heart-whole. The dear creature comes naturally for consolation.

Did Clarkson make the best of his opportunity? I think he did. He wrote I don't know how many poems to his faithless lady; these poems he recited to other fair ladies; he plunged into all sorts of dissipations, not because he was naturally addicted to such things, but because he was so extremely unhappy. He was a very desperate man, and cynical; why, he believed in nothing, always excepting friendship between men and women.

I have mentioned three of his friends; let me not forget Miss Kinlake, who played so beautifully, and, besides, composed such wonderful music.

The amount of friendship with women, and the amount of good wines Mr. Clarkson's grief required

to console it, were most surprising; but we all know how bad is an affair of the heart.

It chanced one night that Mr. Clarkson met, at a reception, Miss Hilda Ford. She was not a girl. She was about thirty; she was very pretty, and not at all æsthetic. She had a good intellect, though, and loved poetry genuinely. Her voice was unusually low and sweet; it had a strange thrilling music in it. She lived with her mother in the country; but they made frequent visits to London.

Now when Clarkson saw her he fell in love at first sight. He loved everything about her: her full beautiful figure, her sensitive face, with the deep dark-blue eyes, the red passionate mouth, the long slender hands, the way she carried herself. He was quite bowled down. His love-grief—that had seen so much service; had been paraded, O, in how many poems! had been talked over, sighed over, laughed over, with what awful laughter—was put away! Mr. Clarkson no longer wished to die, he wished to marry Miss Ford.

He loved his dear friends; but there had been, till now, no one that he had quite wanted to marry. Truth to say, he was rather hoping that some one in whom he could take a very decided interest would turn up; when lo, she appeared upon the scene! I think a man should respect a really useful grief more than Clarkson did. He thrust it away without a tear—what do I say?—without even a farewell sonnet! Heart and soul he went in for his new love. O bards, bards, are ye not an ungrateful lot!

Paul Clarkson, then, loved Hilda Ford; and what is very much to the point is, that the kind feeling he entertained for her she entertained for him. So,

why not say at once that he proposed, and was accepted?

'Hilda,' he cried, looking into her eyes passionately, 'tell me how much you love me?'

She pressed his hands and said,

'I love you with my whole heart. Your love is the crown and glory of my life; it is my supreme rapture and my supreme rest.'

And then, perhaps, because her face flushed so, she leaned it on his shoulder, while he kissed her thick gold hair.

All this was very nice, and just as it should be; but troubles came. As it happened, most unfortunately, Miss Ford had a jealous temperament, and she got to find out about Paul's flirtations, to which she very much objected. Of course, nothing would have been easier than for Paul to have given up such flirtations; to which I think Miss Ford was quite right in excepting. Only that was just what he did not do. Easy, I said; no, far more difficult than we dream of.'

To be in love, and to play at being in love, are two very different things; and, in their own way, they are both pleasant enough. Playing at being in love is a very fascinating game; and like most games, it takes at least two players. This game Miss Ford liked not; a fact which he could not tell to these dear co-players.

'When our engagement is made public,' he said to himself, 'I will knock all these affairs on the head.'

So he very wrongly—wishing at the same time to have and eat his pie—told his beloved that he would forswear the close friendships that so much troubled her; and all the while he privately indulged in them. She found him out once. He rushed down to her

house in the country; where, as can be easily imagined, a scene took place.

It was the beautiful Miss Sandford that Hilda specially objected to. He promised faithfully that he would see her no more; but the old habit was so strong that, as soon as he returned to London, he went back to his Platonic worship of her. He kept, however, his proceedings very dark indeed, I can tell you; but, as we all know, murder will out.

As ill or good luck would have it, an intimate friend of Miss Sandford went to visit some friends who were neighbours of the Fords. To the pleasure of all parties concerned, it turned out that Mr. Clarkson was a mutual friend. Then came the question from our friend's friend,

'Was Mr. Clarkson going to marry Miss Sandford?'

Every one knew what a flirt he was; still his attentions in that quarter were extremely marked.

'Perhaps so,' said Hilda quietly.

She wrote a few words to Paul that night, asking him to come down and see her.

Jam was nice when we were young; but was it nice to be detected in the act of priggishness; when we thought every one was far away, to hear a door-handle turn sharply, and be faced by a father, a mother, or an old servant sure to tell? It was with feelings similar to those then experienced that Paul read Hilda's letter. It contained only a few words, asking him to come down; but he had instantly a sense of something being wrong; he suspected the truth that his sin had found him out.

The Fords lived in a remote country village. It was a hot June evening when he found himself walking up the long garden that surrounded their house.

Mrs. Ford greeted him very warmly :

'I'll go and send Hilda to you,' she said, in her kind cheerful voice.

She left the room, and a few minutes after Miss Ford came in. He heard her dress whispering as she walked.

'Good-evening,' she said, 'it was kind of you to come when I asked you.'

She sat down in a low chair, her hands clasped loosely in each other.

'But I shall not,' she resumed, 'have to tax you again in this way.'

'Have I done anything to displease you?' he answered, turning very pale. 'Tell me at once, and let me have it over.'

'What I have to say is,' she rejoined, 'that everything between us must be over, now and for ever. If it is hard for you, it is harder for me; *you* meant my all of life.'

'Some one has been telling lies about me,' he burst out.

'It is you who have not told the truth,' she said, with perfect quietude.

He turned on her desperately, seeing that she knew everything.

'Hilda,' he cried, 'I *have* acted meanly to you; but this shall never happen in the future.'

'For us two together,' she answered, 'there will be no future.'

'You can't mean that!'

'What else should I mean? I love you, Paul; but I would never trust my happiness in the hands of a man who could deceive me twice. I forgive you, love you, but I trust you no more.'

Outside the birds sang on through the still evening; the air of the room was heavy with the scent of roses.

'You must take back these words,' he said; 'you don't begin to know how I love you.'

'Perhaps not,' she answered; 'but I mean what I have said.'

'Hilda, till I met you it seems to me that I really never lived; you *must* show me some pity.'

He threw himself on his knees before her, caught her hands and kissed them.

'Vain, vain,' she cried. 'It is done, and it cannot be undone.'

'Do you really mean what you say?' he asked, his voice trembling. The man was in earnest at last.

'Yes,' she answered sadly and unwaveringly, 'I mean it most absolutely.'

'Then I must abide by your decision,' he said, rising, a certain pride in his voice. 'Good-bye, then.'

He had got as far as the door when she called him back.

'Don't be too angry with me,' she said, laying her hands in his; 'kiss me.'

He did kiss her long and very passionately; then he left the room, left the house, left the village, and reached London by a late train, bringing a real grief in his sham grief's stead. Resolved on doing something desperate, he cast himself at the feet of the beautiful Miss Sandford; but to his surprise she did not appreciate her happiness.

'I never believed all the fine things you said,' she remarked. 'I knew you to be a flirt; but you amused me, and for that I am grateful.'

He went away very considerably humbled. The real grief, unlike the sham one, was totally useless. It inspired no poem; it stimulated to no pleasant flirtations; it lay at Mr. Clarkson's heart a great, heavy, unremovable weight. Like a wounded animal, he shunned his fellows. He thought grimly to himself as he roamed about the London streets, now grown to

him so dreary, that at last he knew what the real thing was.

In the course of a month or two, there came to him a desire in some way to do something which might at least lighten the gloom that wrapt him round.

'I've spoilt my own life,' he mused, 'still it might turn to some good account for others; I have money, and great sympathy with the people, and they need both. To spend my life helping them is what Hilda would approve of if she knew it, and that is what I will do.'

The very next day he carried out his good resolution; for he was perfectly in earnest. Still the man had been so in the habit of posing that he could not help at first surveying himself with a little melancholy satisfaction as the people's helper, given to them by a great sorrow. When he got really into his work, however, he ceased this sort of exhibition upon the stage of life with himself as spectator. Things seemed to him too serious to incline him to strike an attitude before them. For the first time he forgot himself, in view of other people's calamities.

Truly his labours were not light; and he felt no disposition to toy with his work as once he had toyed with love. Daily he risked his life, sometimes from interfering to protect some woman from the drunken violence of her master, sometimes through long night-watches beside a wretch ill of some frightful contagious disorder. He held not his own life dear unto him, and perhaps it was for that reason that he came alive out of every peril. Often, before the world was well awake, he would return home from a night passed beside the dying, only to snatch a little sleep and go forth again to his self-imposed tasks. He saw sights

and heard sounds before which a less-determined spirit would have quailed; but his strong purpose upheld him.

Among his many friends at the East-end was a family of the name of White. Mrs. White was a widow. She let cheap lodgings. Her eldest child, Sara, added to their small income by playing humble parts at East-end theatres. She was a good girl, this Sara, with laughing blue eyes, a prettily-shaped sensitive face, and a great deal of fair hair.

Mrs. White would exclaim:

'It's not, sir, because some folks never look where they are going and drag their skirts through every puddle they can, that others can't walk in clean places.'

Clarkson became very fond of Sara—not at all in a sentimental way; he had quite done with that. He regarded her more as a father might regard a pet child. She believed in him too; and that was nice. Often, on fine Sundays, would he come and take her off to Richmond or Kew, or somewhere where she could gather wild flowers, if it were in the season of them. To see her pleasure always pleased him.

Mrs. White herself was not at all an ill-meaning woman. She was shockingly untidy though in her appearance; and she had a temper of her own.

One gray October Sunday afternoon Mr. Clarkson found himself, after a two months' absence on his summer holiday, again near Mrs. White's house.

It was a depressing day, and at its most depressed time—between three and four o'clock. As he walked down the dingy streets, with the dirty houses on either side of him—houses that had a look of grim content about them, as if they had now grown proud of their dirt, and would not, if

they could, be different—I say, as he walked along, smoking a very good cigar, he heard the melancholy cry of ‘Water-cresses; fine water-cresses!’

In front of him, with a short clay pipe in his mouth, a man was forcing a reluctant donkey drawing a barrow, the contents of which the driver roared out, from time to time, in a voice suggesting that he would speedily do violence to the passers-by if they did not purchase his nuts and apples. ‘Tang, tang’ kept on all the time from what, to judge by the sound, must have been a very cracked church bell.

Mrs. White resided at 19 Upper Poplar-row. I wonder if, at any time, any poplar had grown there or thereabouts?

Nineteen was the dingiest house in the row, it certainly was, thought Clarkson, as he once more came in sight of it. The bell-handle was off; the knocker had long parted from the door. Clarkson applied his walking-stick. Mrs. White’s voice could be heard within.

‘Go down-stairs, do, Bob, you bad boy; you’re enough to kill me, that you are! Take that, now, and be off!’

And very evidently Mrs. White’s hand came in contact with her offspring’s face. Then followed a howl—perhaps, under the circumstances, not wholly unjustified—a sound of feet hastily retreating to lower regions; then the door opened and disclosed Mrs. White. It cannot be said that her face was clean. Her dress was in holes; it was fastened at the throat by a tawdry brooch. Once, however, she must have been quite a pretty woman.

‘La, sir, is it you? I’m glad to see you back. Such worries as I’ve had—these people in the first-floor not paying their rent.

I’ll tell you what that man is, sir. He’s a nasty, low, good-for-nothing, rum-drinking fellow. And as for beer, he was at home one day, and it was nothing but send, send that young Bob to the King’s Head round the corner for pints of half-and-half, till the child got that tipsy with the sips he took going, that I assure you I put him to bed in a really disgraceful condition. As for his wife, she’s no better than he is. She’s the kind of woman that I wouldn’t trust for five minutes with sixpence of my money—no, nor a penny neither!’

With this Mrs. White, who had spoken at a breath, paused. What she had said had been delivered in the passage, probably for the benefit of her first-floor lodgers.

‘Now, sir, come down. You ain’t too proud, I know, to come into my kitchen. It’s not tidy. I thought I should get to cleaning it yesterday, but no; and my children worrit me so. It’s my impression, sir, that they would like to see their mother dead and in her coffin; young Bob would, I know!’

His mother always called him young Bob; though the truth is, that he was a singularly old-looking child for his age, with a very crafty expression. They were, by this time, in the kitchen, which certainly was, as the landlady had described it, in no nice state. She cleared a chair for her visitor, then rushing to the window addressed a boy smaller than Bob, who was examining with grave interest the contents of the dust-hole.

‘Well, my son, *you* are a nice clean, little boy, aren’t you? Upon my word, you are. I wouldn’t leave off, if I were you. Look long enough, and you’ll be sure to find something—a roast shoul-

der of mutton, with baked potatoes under it, perhaps. Or, I shouldn't at all wonder, a fine turkey and a plum-pudding.'

Then finding her withering irony produced no effect on Master Tommy, who continued just as gravely, and just as silently, his careful inspection of the dustheap, the enraged mother darted from the room and swooped down upon him with a very heavy hand, and an impressive admonition.

'There! take that for being a bad dirty little boy, and for not doing what you're told; and look you, my young gentleman, every time I find you out here playing with dirt I'll serve you just the same.'

At this alarming prospect of *ennui* on the one hand and of punishment on the other, the hero of the dustheap roared louder than ever.

'I see, my dear Mrs. White, that you are a good deal troubled,' remarked Clarkson, when the sound of grief had somewhat subsided; 'but now let us leave the culprits, and tell me how is Sara.'

'That's just the worst part of it, sir. Sally's down with something dreadfully bad; the doctor says it's consumption, but I don't believe in what doctors say.'

'Tell me all about it at once,' said Clarkson, who was most genuinely pained.

'Well, sir,' began Mrs. White — 'well, you hadn't been gone above a week when it seemed to me that she was getting a bit lazy and off her food; but I didn't think much of that, girls often are that way. Perhaps she may have eaten less than I noticed. Lord, when you're as worried as I am, you can't be counting how many mouthfuls of food a child takes to-day, and how many to-morrow; there's no fear of my

boys not doing *their* share. We got some very cold weather just at the end of July; and one night, when she was playing at the Crown Theatre, it came down one of those nasty cold rains. She was much later than usual coming home that night; perhaps I wasn't in the best of tempers, for young Bob had been more troublesome even than he is generally. It was just one when she walked in, the rain streaming down from her. "I couldn't get a bus," she says; "that's what makes me so late. It's so cold and wet, mother, I thought you might have had a bit of fire." "Fires in July!" I said; "we can afford that, can't we? Perhaps you expected a cold fowl and a bottle of port-wine? Eat your bread-and-cheese and drink your beer, do," I says, "and get to bed; that's the best place for you." She took a little bread and beer, but I saw she couldn't stomach the cheese; then she began shivering and crying, and saying she was so cold. Well, I got her to bed, but she coughed through the night. In the morning she felt very hot, and didn't seem to know what she was saying, so I sent for the doctor, — not that I, in most cases, hold with doctors. He said that she had taken a bad feverish cold, and that it had gone to her lungs. However, she seemed to get over the worst of it; only she don't get her strength up, and sometimes she has bad fits of coughing. The doctor says he can't do anything more. I say it's a good thing we don't depend on doctors; it's Nature that will bring her round. You see she eats hardly anything — not even that nice fried fish, which I get from King's opposite, where you can always count on getting it sweet, and just done to a turn.'

'We must see what can be

done, Mrs. White ; I suppose I may see her ?

'Yes ; and it's my belief it will do her good. She has often wondered when you would come back. I'll just go and tell her that you're here.' And away went Mrs. White.

As Clarkson sat there in the dreary room, littered with unwashed things, he thought very sadly of the sick girl up-stairs. He was in deep reflection when Mrs. White returned and showed him up to Sara's room. It was a very small room half way up the stairs ; it had no fireplace ; there was just space for the bed to stand between the door and the window. It looked a hard uncomfortable bed on which the sick girl lay. One hand, which had grown painfully thin, rested on the threadbare coverlet. Her long golden hair brushed out looked like sunlight on the pillow.

'Well, Sara, my child,' began Clarkson, 'you haven't much room for receiving visitors here, have you ? It isn't the room I should desire for an evening party.'

'No,' she answered, with a faint sweet smile ; 'and I wish the bed wouldn't shake so every time the street-door closes.'

Here Mrs. White put in with,

'Now don't you mind that. She's got a fancy into her head that when the bed shakes a little bit it does her harm ; just as if it could !'

'I am so glad you have come,' Sara went on, in a tone of voice that sounded hollow and already far away. 'It has been so dull. I've been very ill ; I can't eat anything now, and I'm not strong enough to get up ; but I suppose I shall some time get stronger, and then I shall be all right.'

'And hungrier than ever.'

'O yes, hungrier than ever, because I sha'n't have eaten for so

long, you know. Please tell me where you have been, and all about it. Have you been far ?'

He sat down in a very rickety chair, and told her as amusingly as he could, though heavy at heart, all that he thought would interest her. When he had rattled away for half an hour she was quite in spirits. She must have Mrs. White produce the new dress and hat she had bought before her illness out of some extra money she had made. He admired hat and dress to the full.

'I must wear them the first Sunday you take me out again, mustn't I ?' she said as simply as a child, and her eyes brightened. 'I got something for them all ; then, rather shyly, 'and I got you a cigar-case, if you don't mind.' Here she produced her offering. He took it from her hand, admiring it, and thanking her.

'I filled it with cigars. Bob got them. They cost threepence each : is that too little to pay ? They were the best I could get here.'

'Little ! why, it's ever so much too much, you dear child. Why, you can get a cigar for a penny.'

'Yes, but not such as *you* like to smoke.'

He laughed, and said that she oughtn't to spoil him. Then she made him try one, saying it would be like old times ; adding very piteously, 'If you don't smoke you will never like to come and see me again.'

'Smoke or not smoke,' he answered gaily, 'I am coming every day till I see you really better ; and to-morrow, as I don't think much of your present doctor, I shall send down a man in whom I have confidence. Now I must be off ; I shall come round early to-morrow ; and kindly pressing her hand, he was gone.

The next day Sara received all the comforts that an invalid could

desire, and early appeared upon the scene the noted and kindly Doctor Forman.

'Well,' asked Clarkson, as the physician came down from the sick-room, 'what do you say?'

'Say, my dear sir?—alas, I have nothing to say that you would like to hear! All we can do is to make the end as gentle as possible, and I don't think that it can be far off.'

'Thank you,' said Clarkson, 'for coming so far;' and there were tears in his eyes.

He went to break the sad news to Mrs. White, who, poor woman, quite broke down, though, through her tears and sobs, she again and again protested her utter disbelief in all doctors. While she was trying to calm herself, Clarkson went to sit with Sara.

'What did the doctor say about me?' she asked.

'He said you were ill.'

'Did he say I was going to die soon? I want the truth, please; let me have it.'

There was something swelling in Clarkson's throat. He strove to speak, but vainly.

'Please tell me,' she entreated; 'I want to know at once which way it is.'

Then Clarkson just managed to articulate, taking her hand in his,

'Dear, he does think that you are in great danger.'

'Thank you; that means that I am going to die.'

Then she was silent; but her eyes had in them a strange look, as if they were trying to picture the land whither she was going. At last she said, with a pressure of his hand,

'I don't mind much. I almost think it's better as it is. You have been always so good to me. I know you didn't mean me to care too much for you, and I myself didn't seem to know how

it was going till you went away this summer; and then I knew—when I found everything so hateful just because there was no chance of seeing you—I knew then that I loved you too much.'

'Sara,' he said, much moved, 'I never thought of that as possible; you will believe that, at least.'

And, indeed, he spoke truly. No shade of anything warmer than friendship had ever stained the purity of his kind feeling for the poor, pretty child. With the passion of love he believed himself done for ever; and it never so much as crossed his mind that he could inspire it in another, least of all in such a one as Sara, so young, so out of the pale, of all the thoughts and associations of his life. That she could feel towards him other than as a sister towards an elder brother had never crossed his mind. Nor had even Mrs. White, a far-seeing woman in her way, foreseen the slightest possibility of danger to her daughter's peace of mind. She was only glad that Sara should have so kind a friend. 'A true gentleman,' she used to say, 'and just as much to be trusted as a Bank of England note.' 'How blind he had been!' he thought, as he waited for Sara's answer.

'Yes,' she said, after a little silence, 'I do know that you never thought of it.'

She spoke very gently and very sadly, and tears were darkening her eyes—the eyes that had once been like streams, the wind and sunlight surprised together.

He put his arm round her, and very tenderly kissed her lips, that even then, with death waiting so near at hand, thrilled under that first pressure of his.

'Heaven bless you, Sara! as my child I *have* loved you.'

Then they sat for some time without speaking, and all the things incident to the daily life of a house like No. 19 Upper Poplar Row went on. The lodgers at Mrs. White's did not trouble themselves because poor, pretty, good little Sara lay there dying. They scrubbed out their rooms; they called messages to each other from floor to floor; the pot-boy from the King's Head tramped up the stairs to Mrs. Smith, who occupied the third floor front, and announced his long-desired presence by a great bang at her door, and by a shrill cry of 'Cans!'

Presently Mrs. White came in and made, poor soul, a desperate attempt to seem gay!

'Have you told Mr. Clarkson about your grand visitor that came this morning?' she asked.

'No,' answered Sara; 'you tell.'

Then Mrs. White unfolded how a fine lady, who busied herself a good deal with East-end folk, had heard of Sara, and come to see what she could do.

'She wished to send a doctor of her own, but was told how a kind friend had already sent us one. She stayed some time chatting, and said she should come again,' continued Mrs. White. 'She seemed to take to my young lady; but then most people do.'

Again Mrs. White had to disappear to prepare something for the invalid. It was then about two o'clock of a bright, rather warm, October afternoon. A bell was heard; that noise, one of the very dismallest, poor school-board children know, for it summons them back to their lessons.

'Shall you care to keep your cigar-case?' asked poor Sara.

'I shall always keep it, and prize it dearly.'

'Then don't tell your wife, or she might make you put it away; some women are so very jealous.

I want you to use it; it is nice enough to use, isn't it?'

'I shall use it always.'

'I'm glad of that.' After a pause she said, 'Say good-bye to me now, while we are alone, then go as soon as mother comes back.'

He understood. He kissed her, and laid her head upon his shoulder, and called her many a dear and tender name. 'Good-bye, Sara,' he said, as they heard Mrs. White making her slow way up.

'Good-bye,' she answered, almost passionately. 'You will never know how I love you; it is much better for me to go, much better.' Then once more, and for the last time, their lips met. Weak with that strain of love, she fell back quite exhausted, only able to whisper 'Go,'—nothing after that.

He did as she wished, feeling almost sure that he should see her no more; and he was right. That very night the sweet pure spirit passed away, to make its unknown journey all alone. Poor child, young as she was, she had known one of life's greatest experiences—that of loving where there was no hope of love being returned.

When Clarkson the next morning saw the blinds down in Sara's room, he was not surprised. He had brought with him, on the chance that she might still be able to enjoy them, some beautiful flowers. The door of the house stood open, so he walked straight in and up to Sara's room. As he entered he saw that some one, who was kneeling by the bed, rose hastily; then he saw that it was Hilda Ford.

They took hands silently; he went over to the bed, and placed the flowers on the girl's bosom. Then, leaning down, he kissed, very reverently, the cold lips

that this time did *not* thrill under his; he looked long and lovingly on her face, which wore a look of unearthly rest; then he rose and turned to the door.

'Do you know where Sara's mother is?' he asked.

'Seeing after her other children. They have to be seen to. I have promised Mrs. White that I would do some errands for her in the neighbourhood.

'Are you going now?'

'At once.'

'May I walk with you?'

'I should only be too glad if you would.'

'Thank you, then, I will.'

So together they left the house of death, and walked out into the bright October morning. After they had walked on a little way in silence, his first question came,

'Was it you that called at the Whites' yesterday?'

'Yes; and even in the short time I saw her, I grew quite fond of Sara. Poor child! she is at rest now. I have heard a great deal about you from them. You seem to have been their good angel; nor are they all whom you have befriended about here. Before yesterday I heard of you from more than one household; you have been doing good work.'

'Thank you,' he said simply, hardly able to realise that he was with the one woman he had ever really loved. The minutes were passing. Soon she and he would part to meet no more. She was a little pale, paler than usual but lovelier than ever. He would have liked there and then to have gone down on his knees before her.

O bards, bards! ye who prate of the romance of lovers in gardens, lovers in woods, and where not beside, so long as it is a place where romantically-inclined persons would like to be, why not at once own the truth that there

is often as much sentiment connected with places of the most unromantic kind?

Write, O poet novelist:

'The scent of lilies growing in a high-walled garden; the night-ingale's passionate strain; all the charm and music of a summer night—will these not always bring to his mind, if he could ever for one moment forget it, that face of hers as he saw it in the full moonlight, and recall the low music of her voice?'

Write, O prose-teller of facts:

'The sound of jingling tram-bells; London Bridge with great ships visible therefrom; open stalls, with men calling out their wares; the smell issuing from overflowing gin-palaces—these, though he is perfectly familiar with them, will for all time be to Paul Clarkson associated with the woman he loved.'

He was so silent, that at last she said to him,

'Why don't you talk to me?'

'Because I'm thinking of you so much. To see you again is like great light falling on eyes but just opened. I am dazzled by you.'

She did not answer, but walked on in a very business-like manner.

Presently she said,

'Sara was very fond of you; do you think she was too fond of you?'

'I am afraid she was getting to care for me at the end. I never meant her to; but I suppose you won't believe that?'

'Yes, I will. I don't think you *did* flirt with Sara, poor child.'

At length the commissions were all of them executed, and they returned to Upper Poplar Row. What a strange day it was for Paul and Hilda! Mrs. White was too much upset to see after anything; and as she was a woman who quarrelled with her neigh-

bours right and left, there was no one to whom she could turn but the friends who were with her, poor dear! She sat in her dirty kitchen and sobbed; while Hilda, with the sleeves of her dress rolled up, displaying her large lovely arms, washed-up accumulated cups and plates. Paul looked after the fire, and kept Bob in order. At length Mrs. White grew quieter, and by evening they came to the conclusion that she might be left.

'Good-bye, and bless you both,' she said. 'No one had ever a word to say against my Sally; well, she's out of the bother of this bad world. I don't see what's the good of being in it, slave, slave, day and night, and then some day, like an engine driven hard, the boiler bursts; but what's the good of talk? I say, if there's any power looking after the world, it doesn't trouble itself much about us that's in it.'

So they left her, and stood out in the cold clear night.

'Now?' said Paul.

And she answered 'Yes.'

'What are you going to do now?'

'The most natural thing I can do—take a hansom to our apartments in Westminster; and you?'

'I?' he answered, somewhat bitterly, 'I! O, I feel in a mood of exploring London by night. I might come in for an adventure. Perhaps you will see in the morning papers, "Murder in the East End."'

'I think,' she replied quietly, 'you had best see me home.'

'That of course I should like to do; but I feared my presence would only be an offence to you.'

'No, you were mistaken.'

So a hansom was called, in

which they rattled away. How pretty the lamps on London Bridge looked, shining in the water, as our two passed over it! 'How very fast he is driving!' she said; 'we shall get there quite soon, at this rate, sha'n't we?'

'Yes,' he answered absently: he was thinking of something he wanted to say to her, and wondering, as we have all wondered in similar positions, whether he should say it or not.

'What are you thinking of?' she inquired, 'that you say nothing?'

'I was thinking of the past.'

'I want us to forget that. I want us to be friends.'

'Hilda, that could never, never be.'

'And why not?' in her lowest and most subtly sweet tones.

'Because I love you too desperately to make it possible.'

'Do you still love me, Paul?'

'Love you? My God, I should think I did! Have I not shaped my life as I thought you would have me? To see you once again has been my prayer, yet what will it do for me but make me more in love with you than ever! I had a dream of you some nights ago. I thought I lay dying, and you came in, and leaned down over me, and kissed me, and I put my arms round you. O, the heaven of that dream! Hilda, I am a changed man. Is your love utterly dead? would it ever be possible for you to trust me again?'

She drew quite close to him, put her hand in his, and rested her cheek upon it as she said,

'What do you think, dear?'

'Hi! there, cabby, down with the glasses!'

What cabby himself has shut down, shall we seek to raise?

TWO DAYS IN THE DESERT.

I.

IMAGINATION.

It chanced, no matter how, that we four sat quaffing our *café Arabe* one spring evening, beneath the trellised vines of a certain village hostelry not a thousand miles from the city of Tunis.

The population of the little African seaport, a picturesque medley of Oriental and Greek, were met together upon the beach before us for their customary evening stroll. Drowsy songs of Moorish boatmen, as they hauled in their nets, fell, not displeasingly, upon our ears. Ever and anon, from the cupola of a neighbouring mosque, a sleepy mueddin flung out his summons to all true believers. Drove of meek-eyed camels cast their uncouth bulk upon the sands; while their drivers, erst so noisy, knelt, each pious Moslem on his strip of carpet, to pay his evening devotions to Allah and the Prophet.

The sun setting over the low western hills lit up the vessels alongside the Mole, imparting a flitting glory to the rough Sicilian fishing-craft and piratical-looking feluccas from Tripoli and the Levant. Two faithful hounds couched at our feet, nosing from time to time the plethoric game-bags which they had so well assisted us to fill. A mere glance at those game-bags was enough to put the very mediocre sportsmen whose prowess had stuffed them on the best of terms with themselves, and to imbue them with benevolence towards the whole human race. A post-prandial

satisfaction possessed their souls, nor were lacking the fumes of that weed which maketh glad the heart of man.

The four kindred spirits who graced that festive board were—, but no, they shall not be pilloried before the public gaze in their own ancestral names. Remembering what is to come, this writer would die rather than divulge *that* secret.

A marine imp of some fifteen summers, much given to unseasonable mirth, shall be to the reader of this strange eventful history a midshipmite, and nothing more.

Herakles is a decent disguise for another, whose thews and sinews were the envy of his peers.

A medical gentleman, reported to be very, *very* terrible when roused, whose gigantic intellect was (like that of Napoleon I., as he is fond of reminding us) wedded to a comparatively small person, may safely be alluded to as the Doctor.

The identity of that rarest of good fellows, the ecclesiastic, who completed this quatrain, shall be extinguished by a cowl. We will call him Friar John.

We have already intimated that it was *after dinner*. No one who has sat at meat at 'the laird's' table after a hard day's grouse-driving; or who, after toiling all day with heavy salmon-rod, seeks the welcome ingle-nook of some snug Caledonian inn, to compare notes and fly-hooks with a fellow-piscator; or who, having wrested victory from some clipping thirty-tonner, leaves his bonnie bark at

anchor off the familiar yacht club stairs, to dine and fight the battle o'er again in that pleasant caravanserai—no one, in short, who knows human nature, will doubt which turn the conversation took.

Do men discuss the binomial theorem at a bump-supper? or the Burials Bill at a Lord Mayor's banquet? Are not the prospects of the 'Varsity match' and the remarkable absence of calapash in the turtle more probably the respective topics at those feasts of reason?

Of course, we talked of shooting. And after each sportsman had explained how impossible it would have been for 'the best shot in Christendom, sir,' to have hit *'that bird,'* which he, the speaker, missed—after each had compared by inference his own remarkably good shooting with the very so-so practice of his neighbours (an invariable custom of even the most charitable of men when field-sports are upon the *tapis*)—then was the time for the cunning medicine-man to ask, with well-feigned nonchalance,

'Have any of you fellows done any big-game shooting?'

The Friar looked shocked, and said 'No!' emphatically. But why his reverence should have regarded the extermination of the larger *fera naturæ* as a high crime and misdemeanour, seeing that he viewed with a very lenient eye the wholesale slaughter of un-offending quails, deponent knoweth not.

'Nature,' he would say, in defence of this inconsistency, 'has clearly designed that the *genus homo* shall eat quails, and be eaten by lions. The man who flies in the face of this unwritten law, by attempting to prey upon lions, deserves his fate when the king of beasts assimilates him.'

The ingenuous midshipman ob-

served in reply to the big-game question that he had fired several shots at a porpoise, 'if that counts; but,' added the youth, with a blush, 'I'm not sure that I hit him.'

The man of thews said nothing, because, as a matter of fact, he never had held on anything bigger than a rabbit. But if looks went for anything, his companions were free to suppose that our Herakles was mentally reckoning up the number of head of lion and rhinoceros who had fallen victims to his bow and spear.

Imperceptibly the subject of big-game shooting glided into a discussion on* *the wild delights of a roving life in uncivilised lands*. Upon this inspiring theme the dullest of us waxed eloquent. Had the speakers been Messrs Mungo Park, Burton, Speke, and Samuel Baker, instead of—well, four individuals who, whatever may be their present exalted positions, were not then shining lights in the Central African Exploration Society, their flights of rhetoric could scarcely have soared higher as they enlarged upon it. If Mr. Stanley of the *New York Herald* had chanced our way while the Doctor was dilating upon a scheme for opening up the sources of the Zambesi (he spoke of it as if it were a surgical operation), that indefatigable journalist must have seized the little man's hand, and wasted upon him his world-famous 'Dr. Livingstone, I believe?'

The enthusiasm was at its height; each vied with each in endeavouring to make it clear that, of all types of human existence, the life of a dweller in tents—of a Bedouin, of a Krim Tartar,

* Attention is drawn to these words, because they formed a stock phrase of our Herakles, and one for whose use he paid full dear in time to come.

of a scourer of the trackless wastes of the desert—was dearest to his soul. Where lavish panegyric failed, noise took its place. Everybody spoke at once. 'Think of glorious nights around the camp-fire,' suggested the Doctor. 'And the tales of some good Haroun al Raschid,' continued the midshipmite. 'And the maddening chase of the wild-boar amongst the spurs of the Atlas,' roared Herakles! 'And the *dolce far niente* of the midday rest beneath the fan-palms of the green oasis,' hinted, in the gentlest tones, Friar John.

The solemn Turks must have taken the party for Nazarene Dervishes working the steam up. Doubtless they momentarily expected to see us leap to our feet and whirl 'about in reel and rout,' with coat-tails streaming out, meteor-like, at right angles to our persons.

Why the Doctor should have chosen to burst his bomb-shell amongst us at this particular juncture, goodness only knows. The effect of that one ill-timed remark of his upon our spirits was as water unto fire, or as an extinguisher to a candle. It destroyed at one fell swoop the peace of mind of his companions and the hopes of those sons of Islam who thought to see us dance. The latter, seeing us to be quite chapfallen, departed grumbling, leaving the Friar repeating blankly, 'Three A.M. to-morrow: can he really mean it?'

So have we heard, on board the crazy steam craft which convey the sickly sons of Cockaigne from London Bridge to Southend, a minstrel youth fling out some stirring ballad of the sea, telling mayhap of 'the wind that blows, the ship that goes, and the lass that loves a sailor,' or eke of the delights of the life of a pirate

bold, or of some good ship 'rolling home, rolling home, rolling home across the sea.'

Then has he that listened to those most untuneful strains watched a while also. And behold, Nemesis! For when the wind *did* blow, and the ship *did* roll, the songster would be heard no more, I ween. Pale as death would grow his cheek; and—ah me!—the harp he loved (it was an accordion, but no matter) spoke no more that journey. For the ocean claimed her own.

Yes; had we been that sea-sick vocalist, the change from gay to grave could not have been more complete as the Doctor cried cheerily,

'Well, my dear fellows, I *knew* you would be of my mind in this matter. Come, applaud my promptitude! Camels are ordered, and I have arranged for a start at 3 A.M. to-morrow. The captain will give us leave for four days—not very long, I own, but still time enough to enable us to form some idea of camp-life.'

Observing the marked elongation of jaw with which these tidings were received, the little man continued, speaking very fast, 'We will stop the first night at Kairideen,—of course you know where Kairideen is?'

He to whom this query was addressed nodded an affirmative, not because he did know, but because the cold eye of the medico said, plain as words could speak, 'The man who is ignorant of the whereabouts of Kairideen must be a deplorable idiot.'

'There we shall see the tomb of Dido and the remains of a Phœnician aqueduct of fabulous antiquity,' whispered he to Friar John, who dabbled in archæology. 'And should the boar not be plentiful there,' added the tempter aloud, 'we have only to push on

to Sidi-Koom, on the confines of the Sahara. Its neighbourhood is famous for lions' (infamous, thinks at least one of his hearers, who feigns immense delight); 'and as the district is infested by jackals and leopards' (the knees of the listeners are loosened with dismay), 'as well as overrun by boars, we are sure—quite sure—of good sport.'

'But, my dear friend—' protested the Friar feebly.

'But me no buts, reverend sir! My purpose to start at 3 A.M. is as fixed as the stars!' Then, *sotto voce*: 'The country teems with archaeological treasures. Think of a temple of Nisroch turned successively into an amphitheatre by the Carthaginians, and a fortress by the Romans (the younger Scipio pitched his camp there).'

The worthy man's mouth watered visibly. Visions of his own humble name, dignified by affixes of mysterious grandeur, beginning with F.R., floated before his mind's eye. What a paper he would be able to send home to the *Quarterly*, on the 'Limits of the Carthaginian Empire under Genseni'! What a flood of light might not this journey throw on the vexed question of the religion of the ancient Punic race!

Nevertheless he still hesitated. 'I should like it of all things,' he explained; 'but I know that as sure as my name is Asterisk, I shall get sunstroke or rheumatism, according as the weather turns out wet or dry.'

'And pray, my excellent friend,' inquired our medical man haughtily, 'shall not *I* be at your side to administer the convenient "Cockle" or the gruesome "Gregory"? I assure you I have taken plenty for all four of us.'

'He is taking plenty for all four of us!' echoed the midshipman, as if he was going to cry.

'Now this is so like the Doctor; so *very* like him! Might I be allowed to ask the chair whether provisions for four persons are also amply supplied?' demanded the man of muscle.

'Certainly; nothing has been forgotten. Let me see: potted meats, potatoes, ham, *pâté-de-faisan*, Bass's bitter, champagne, aerated waters, *eau-de-vie*, &c. There's the list of contents of the camel-packs' (tendering a lengthy catalogue to our Herakles). 'Read them.'

The latter shook his head in a manner to indicate that he was more grieved than angry.

'Thank you, I have heard *quite* enough,' sighed he. Then turning to address us with the air of a judge reluctantly summing-up the *prima-facie* evidence of a murder case, 'You observe that he provides camels, victuals, drink, and *materia medica* for all four of us before he dreams of asking whether we care to go; and now I'll be bound he'll be quite upset if we refuse to join him in what I can only *stigmatise* as a wild-goose chase. Yes, I repeat, a wild-goose chase!'

'I knew enough of your character, my Herakles, to feel sure you would jump at a chance of tasting, if even for a few days, *the wild delights of a roving life in uncivilised lands*,' retorted the Doctor, with a strong accent on the last few words.

The unhappy Herakles smiled a ghastly smile at this superfluity of naughtiness on the part of the chair.

However, his question had the effect of bringing very clearly before the two others the unpleasant fact that, unless they quickly concerted some more vigorous measures of opposition, they were infallibly destined to be led forth into the wilderness like the chil-

dren of Israel, by a diminutive, but most determined, Moses.

The nearness of the impending danger roused even the midshipman from an unctuous examination of the list of contents of the camel-packs.

That malicious imp, in a style of Eastern allegory, which he has much affected since our sojourn in this stronghold of Islam, compared the motion of the 'ships of the desert' to that of the ships which ply the Straits of Dover.

'The effect upon your inside, my Herakles,' whispered he to the worst sailor in the party, '*is identical, only more so.*'

'Then,' said the other, striking a statuesque attitude, indicative of unyielding resolution, 'if that is really so, no earthly consideration shall induce me to surmount the angular back of a camel.'

'I have always been informed,' continued the heartless boy, not heeding this interruption, 'that the camel is a most vindictive quadruped, and is given to lunching off the legs of its rider.'

'Kindness,' said our friend the Friar, in reply to this disquieting statement, 'will cure any amount of vice. I shall stroke and pet my camel into a friendly frame of mind.'

'You might just as well stroke the dome of St. Paul's to propitiate the Dean and Chapter,' quoted he of the unseasoned inside.

The Friar put the question to the chair, 'whether the water on these occasions is not carried in bottles made out of the interiors of beasts;' and being informed that such was the case, observed resignedly, 'Then I know that I shall suffer tortures of thirst before my proud stomach submits to retain the horrid stuff.'

'When thermometer's 200 in the sun,

In the sun,

That water's smell is not a pleasant one,
Pleasant one,'

chanted the midshipmite inconsequently.

'Permit me to inform the last speaker that the solution of tannin which gives the pungent smell' ('Pungent?' interpolated the frivolous boy derisively) 'to which he refers, is highly beneficial to the system,' said our Æsculapius soothingly.

I have never ceased to marvel at the docility with which we permitted ourselves to be partners in this mad enterprise. But, to cut a long story short, the meeting repaired on board the ship to which its several members belonged at 11 P.M.; the professor's face triumphant, the countenances of the rest of us expressive of anything but joy. For we had pledged our sacred words to start at 3 A.M. the following day.

II.

REALITY.

SPARE me to tell what preparations the several members of the expedition made for this journey. What weapons were taken (they were many), what changes of raiment, what quantity of victuals and drink, are none of the reader's business. I may mention, however, that when the caravan halted at the end of the first day's journey, it was discovered that the only wrap of any description of which Friar John could boast was an ecclesiastical vestment yclept a pocket surplice. The good creature affected to be vastly put out at this oversight on the part of his *valet-de-chambre*. This writer is, however, by no means certain that the Friar did not expressly stipulate for a pocket surplice to be packed up in his travelling-bag. Whether this garment represented the closest match to an

a word, he was dear to us, only in the commercial sense of that word.

'Bismillah, Ali! and where are the camels?' inquired our leader; 'order them round at once.'

The Moor bowed the knee once more in a manner highly gratifying to the dignity of the Doctor, and departed to do the little man's behests, while the members of the expedition sat down in a circle upon their paraphernalia, to wait.

Half an hour passed (I mention the time in proof of the Job-like patience of the party); the sun rose and shone with African fierceness upon their backs; but still no plaint escaped them. Did I say none? Yes, *one* moan there was. It was when Herakles said something jocularly (Heaven save the mark!) about his being 'a patient Grizzel patiently grizzling.'

At the end of that time, six of the most miserable and attenuated specimens of the genus *dromedarius camelus* which this writer has ever seen shambled down to the beach. With them one would have reversed the proverb, and said that it was the *first* straw which, to judge by appearances, would break their backs. No very prodigious stretch of imagination was required to conceive those lank and lean beasts squeezing through a good-sized needle's eye. Two were, moreover, somewhat lame, and all were thickly plastered, from their shoulders downwards, with mud and *débris* of the stables.

The leader of the expedition eyed them contemptuously for a few seconds, and then demanded to know whether these were the best animals procurable. The rest the while maintained a stolid silence. Their misery was too deep for speech.

Ali, however, with more vigour than from his aged appearance one would have supposed him to possess, commenced strapping the packs upon those wretched quadrupeds. He laid about him too on both the drivers to such good purpose, that in an incredibly short space of time the expedition was wending slowly out into the deserts, to the impressive strains of the midshipman's banjo, its track being marked for a good mile by the still dripping pack of fluids.

Then was the time to discover what had been forgotten, and of course the following trifles were found wanting.

'Where were the dogs?' inquired Herakles.

'The dogs? Why, there! Don't you see them?' pointing to his two spaniels, Dash and Ponto.

'No, no! the boarhounds, I mean, Doctor. Your dogs are no use for big-game shooting. You surely don't mean to say you've not arranged to bring any decent sized dogs?'

'I thought Ali would have provided them,' expostulated the unhappy medicine-man. But his inquisitor was not to be put off in this manner.

'There, there!' he said grimly, 'you never thought of asking. It doesn't matter, of course; only our chances of getting big game without proper dogs are *nil*, absolutely *nil*, that's all.'

'Well, and I'm very glad to hear it,' said the Friar candidly.

So was the midshipman, but he spake not. After this unfortunate passage of arms, the expedition relapsed once more into painful silence, the Doctor ruffled, Friar John anxious, Herakles querulous, and the midshipman dormant. Twenty minutes passed before the second awful discovery was made.

'Ali, where are the *tents*?' in-

quired Herakles, whose confidence in our leader's qualifications for the important post he occupied had now been greatly diminished.

Ali had not brought any, and admitted the fact without a blush. Clearly he had supposed the expedition would provide its own. The man of thews could contain himself no longer.

'Do you *hear* this? Doctor, do you *understand* that there are *no tents*? For my own part, I don't so much mind it; but think of Friar John with his rheumatism sleeping out in these heavy dews! Remember, too, that I am responsible to his father for that infant's health, and he's got a touch of influenza already; besides, we're all morally certain to be moon-struck (though of course that can't hurt *you*!). Really, it's too bad. Did you order tents?'

The Doctor paled visibly under this question.

'Why, of course I did,' stammered he; 'that is, I certainly intended— Where's that beggar Ali?'

Ali trotted his camel within shouting distance, and smiled a servile smile.

'O villain, villain! smiling ——' (he *said* it, but this writer won't repeat it) 'villain!' quoted the medical gentleman, in an ecstasy of rage. 'Why didn't you provide tents? Did not I tell you?'

The ancient shook his head, and much mutual recrimination followed; but, as the midshipman observed, with one of his hideous guffaws, '*that* did not mend matters.' Which, indeed, was painfully obvious.

We had made good but a very few miles, when the capering beast bestrode by that young gentleman exhibited premonitory signs of vice. It was a female.

Its evil propensities manifested

themselves at first by a decided reluctance to advance. The driver's nostrums to cure an attack of 'the vapours' in a lady camel appeared to be two in number. The first was a liberal use of Arabic execrations shouted at the utmost pitch of the voice; the second an equally liberal application of a thick stick to the obstinate quadruped's forelegs.

Having exhausted his entire stock of bad language to no purpose upon the brute, the man proceeded to apply his magic wand to its knees with such good-will as to cause the sufferer to give vent to horrid shrieks of pain and rage. This exercise he continued until the wretched animal broke into a doubtful trot, and regained its position in the caravan.

No sooner, however, was the driver perched once more upon his own beast, than the cantankerous creature commenced its tricks over again.

'She *will* do it!' groaned the unlucky midshipman upon its back.

The amusement which the idiosyncrasies of that camel afforded us at first gradually gave way to disgust. Sometimes, when it had dropped very far to the rear, its despairing rider would resort to the transparent artifice of holding a bunch of dates before its nose at the end of a stick. This ruse, however, proved quite ineffective, the only result being that the disappointed creature would crane its long neck sideways, and bring its teeth within a very few inches of its tempter's shuddering calves.

The camel-driver would then dismount, and a skirmish of a quarter of an hour would ensue, at the end of which time the beast might perhaps be prevailed upon to proceed for a few hundred yards at a hand-gallop. Its motion at such times was a sort of

polka-mazurka. It moved ahead *per saltum*, by leaps and bounds, as Mr. Gladstone is wont to say of the revenue under a Liberal Administration.

The countenance of the midshipman under these circumstances was a sight to make the angels weep. That agonised young man would clasp his arms around its hump in an attitude expressive of an affection which was the very opposite of his real sentiments towards the brute.

So we journeyed on until noon, by which time the expedition was like to drop with hunger and fatigue; yet still the indomitable Doctor led us forward.

After a silence, broken only by the soft thud of the camel's flat feet into the sand, of fully half an hour, the Friar said,

'I see the barometer has fallen fully two-tenths' (that is meteorological language for one-fifth) 'of an inch. I fear we shall have rain.'

He had provided himself with a miniature aneroid, on whose storm warnings he placed implicit reliance. His reverence was one of those rare ones who, like the White Knight, would have liked to have travelled with a beehive, in case we might meet any bees.

'Ah,' said the Doctor, with a superior smile, 'the reverend gentleman has caught a mare's nest! On the confines of the Sahara,' continued he, with the air of a Lecturer to the College of Surgeons, 'rain is almost unknown; but if,' incredulously, 'the glass has really fallen decimal two of an inch, then mark my words, we are in for a simoom.'

The immediate effect of this terrible prognostication was a motion advanced by the Friar, 'That this expedition do at once return.'

'To you,' he said, pointedly,

'whose duty and pleasure it is to seek the "bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth," to you who "sweep through the deep while the stormy winds do blow," it may perhaps matter little whether your bones are left to whiten the desert to-day, or whether you fulfil your destinies as food for powder a few years hence; but as for me, a man of peace, I prefer that my ossuary remnants should be deposited in the family vault; and he turned in act to go.

Now was the time for the midshipman (who was behind, as usual) to prove that, if his camel was devoid of virtue, its rider had enough for both.

That heroic imp sheered alongside the pusillanimous Friar and delivered his broadside. A portion only of the arguments he used are on record, but they proved so satisfactory that the deserter returned to his allegiance, and the march continued.

'*Humanum est errare*,' hinted the youth; 'the Doctor is not infallible in his weather forecasts, neither is your reverence always wrong; and as a matter of fact, Ali has just assured me that the worst we have to fear is a good soaking. It is going to rain.'

'Do you really think so?' said the other, visibly comforted.

'If I did not, if I for one moment supposed that the simoom was about to exhale his deadly breath, do you suppose that I should not have seconded your motion?'

This seemed tolerably convincing. But our nerves had sustained an ugly shock. Even Herakles scanned the horizon anxiously from time to time, as if he momentarily expected to view the 'ravaged landscape mingling with the skies.'

The caravan now surmounted a

low range of hills. From this coign of vantage one might espy the ruins of the Phœnician aqueduct, which we knew to be our bourne.

'Let the camp be pitched under yonder cactus-hedge,' cried our despotic chieftain. 'We will remain here to-night.'

Nothing loth, his famished followers slid off their patient beasts. He of the rubicund proboscis spread our rugs in the cool sweet shade, and proceeded to prepare our meal, for it was long past lunch-time.

And now, while the pack-saddles were being rifled of their appetising contents, while the kettle sang in the embers and the meat turned on the spit, while the glory of a landscape full of classic associations extended far as eye could reach, the good Friar John was in his element.

Pointing to one after another of the lumps of crumbling masonry about us, he peopled the plain with shadowy forms from the dust of forgotten centuries. 'Twas the happiest blending of history and romance.

Far away to the north-east he showed us the rough outline of Cape Carthage. Under his gentle necromancy we almost saw the legions of Rome advancing on the doomed town. This very road, he told us, resounded with their martial tread; the bray of trumpets and the shock of battle were almost in our ears. Then he drew such a word-picture of the birth of Dido's ancient city, as called to mind a certain Turner, standing, if we remember right, in a murky corner of the National Gallery. The familiar glow of rich mysterious haze, the half-suggested piles of marble, and shimmer of blue waters laden with huge quinquetermes, was before us while he rambled on.

Who but our Orpheus should then take his lyre (the youth had a sweet tenor voice, an excellent thing in a midshipman), and cheer our souls with song.

He sang of the gallant frigate *Arethusa*, dear to all nautical hearts, and of the maid who dwelt 'by the banks of Allan Water,' and of how she loved and lost; and last he sang of the pleasures of the chase and of hound and of horn in the morning. And at his singing (shade of Charles Kingsley, forgive me!) the stately camels nodded their tall heads, and the Arabs gathered round and clapped their skinny hands in unison, and the rest heeded not the sun and the flies, and all the petty troubles that beset them, as they laughed and shouted in the chorus of that mighty song.

Then to luncheon; a goodly meal did that appear, I wis, spread out beneath the cactus-hedge. But where were the drinkables?

'What, ho! Ah, thou naughty varlet, bring straightway four stoups of ale. Hast forgotten the liquids?'

Thus the Doctor 'in merry pin.'

'Where's the beer?' inquired the more matter-of-fact Herakles.

The dragoman thus accosted produced from the pack three bottles, which he placed solemnly upon the sand beside us. Two of these were dropsical-looking glass things, containing, perhaps, half a pint of soda-water apiece. The third, however, was labelled I.P.A., and we hailed it with a cordial shout of welcome.

'Bring some more beer, Ali, bring some more!' cried the medico expansively.

The ancient bowed his turbaned head until the red nose almost touched the ground, but he did not budge.

Glances of dismay were exchanged between the Friar and

Herakles. 'From that man's manner,' said the latter, after gazing stonily at the dragoman for some seconds, 'I gather that there is no more beer!'

The midshipman ran to the reeking pack to try the truth of this.

An involuntary wail of horror escaped him, for sure enough not another bottle remained unbroken.

I forbear to record the language made use of by the expedition on receipt of this awful news. Herakles seized an earthfast stone, and projected it at the deceptively bulky pack, to work off his superfluous choler. The Friar, although he bore the bitter blow without a murmur, still seemed to have 'great dispositions to cry.' Even the marine imp looked glum; while as for the Doctor, he rose to his feet, retired a little space apart, and communed with his umbrella, in some mysterious tongue (he said it was Chock-taw), like one possessed.

The question now arose, how should we divide the little remnant? First we proposed to cast lots for that precious bottle of Bass; but as each remembered that three to one is long odds, this scheme was vetoed without more ado. Then a brilliant notion struck the midshipman. 'Make it into shandy-gaff,' said he, 'using the soda-water as ginger-pop!'

This was accordingly done; and the four parched travellers had to content themselves with a glass of diluted pale ale apiece—the merest drop in the ocean of their prodigious thirstiness. When it was gone, when the last gill (whatever that may amount to) had been swallowed, the members of the expedition, if they had not glared at one another with glassy eyes expressive of unutterable drought, would have been more than mortal.

'Shall we try the water-skins?' said Friar John at last, like a shipwrecked seaman proposing that last resource of famine—cannibalism—to his fellow-castaways.

No one answered.

'I think we shall have to try the water-skins,' repeated the poor man, looking round for sympathy.

'I suppose it amounts to that,' replied Herakles, eyeing the shapeless things with palpable disgust. The midshipman groaned audibly, and muttered something about 'knowing the worst.'

'Ali, bring one tumblerful of the water for medical inspection,' said the Doctor, with a laudable effort at facetiousness.

A large earthenware bowl was accordingly produced, containing something which (perhaps because it was wet, and resembled no other known liquid) the dragoman called water.

'It requires no chemical analysis to establish the fact that *that* fluid is unfit for human use,' said Herakles, holding his nose.

Even the medico admitted the percentage of tannin to be excessive. 'But still,' said he, boldly gulping down half a teaspoonful, 'it is not positively nauseous.'

'Well,' said our Friar, making the best of a bad job, 'our wisest course is to make tea of it; boiling, I am told, destroys all germs of animalculæ.'

'Let four quarts of tea be prepared, then, by 7 P.M.,' commanded our leader, with a wry face. 'And now, my dear friends, for a shot at a boar! We have three good hours of daylight. What think you, my Herakles? how shall we arrange it?' How would it be now,' continued he persuasively, 'for *you* to take the dogs and the midshipman' ('Observe the order of precedence—*dogs* and *midshipman*,' in-

terpolated the insulted imp)—‘dogs and midshipman,’ went on the Doctor, not deigning to notice this interruption, ‘and make a *détour* across the valley! When you reached the crest of the opposite hill you might sweep away to the right’ (this with a wave of his hand, as though to indicate that the distance to be traversed was the merest *bagatelle*)—‘you might sweep away to the right, and so return through those olive-groves to the encampment. The Friar and myself, by taking up our positions in yonder patch of melons, would be well placed to cut off any boar which you started amongst the brushwood.’

Accordingly Herakles and the midshipman, guns in hand and dogs ahead, trudged off meekly enough on their *détour*.

‘The beauty of this arrangement, reverend Friar,’ explained the perfidious medicine-man as soon as the others were out of ear-shot, ‘is that you and I shall be able to sit in that melon patch, like Jonah under his gourds, while our friends yonder have a weary six-mile tramp before them. See what a thing it is to have an individual at the head of affairs with a gift for organisation.’

An hour passed, during which time the heavens grew black with cloud. Herakles, whose bulky proportions had now dwindled to a gray speck, was then perceived to discharge his piece. Immediately afterwards the report of the midshipman’s deadly weapon was distinguished, and a confused yelping of dogs and shouting came down upon the breeze.

‘They’ve fired at something—I hope it’s not a lion,’ said the Friar, raising his glass to his eye with a tremulous hand. ‘Dear me! I didn’t know that one of the drivers was with them.’

The Doctor was standing on

a friendly boulder, viewing the action, like Bonaparte, with folded arms.

‘What’s that? what’s that?’ cried he. ‘For Heaven’s sake, Friar John, give me the glass! I do believe they’re attacked by Bedouins. As I’m alive, that black thing is an Arab tent. Yes, look at that *savage* gesticulating with a curtle-axe.’

However, as a most careful survey failed to reveal more than one enemy, the leader of the expedition contented himself with precautionary measures.

‘We must be prepared to defend the camp to the death, Friar,’ said he firmly. ‘I suppose, in a case of this sort, you would not mind taking an active part—firing a rifle, I mean?’

‘I’d rather not,’ replied the embarrassed ecclesiastic.

‘O, but you must, your reverence; you really must. I can’t permit myself to be carried into captivity by a horde of marauding ruffians, just to humour your absurd crotchets about the sanctity of human life.’

‘Very well, if you think I *ought*, I’ll do it; but I don’t believe I shall be wanted. See, they’re coming back again, and without the Arab.’

‘Then they’ve shot him, and quite right too,’ said the murderous medico.

The Friar answered never a word; but he shuddered on perceiving his companion to be a man of blood and iron.

He and the doctor now evacuated the melon-patch, and retired with some haste upon the baggage, proposing to put the encampment in a state of defence.

In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to find Ali, as the stupid camel-drivers were perfectly callous to the signs and beseechings of the Doctor, who,

of course, they could not comprehend.

After waking the echoes with the syllables 'Ali, Ali, A-li' in every intonation of grief and anger, they were reluctantly compelled to give him (and almost themselves also) up for lost.

'Without those camel-drivers, we shall not be able to make any use of our first line of defence,' said the Doctor ruefully. (Friar John did not understand.) 'Why,' continued the little man, 'the nomads of the desert invariably use their camels as a breastwork to fire over, when surprised by a hostile party; the hump is so convenient to take cover behind,' added he, evidently mindful of one of Mr. Carl Haag's water-colours. 'But as I am quite incapable of controlling the animals myself, and I know your reverence is in a similar plight, we shall be at the mercy of the marauders until Ali returns.'

'Where can he be?' wondered the Friar.

However, the advent of the others cut short what was at the best a fruitless speculation.

'Well, my dear Herakles,' said the little Doctor, nothing doubting that the man of thews had indeed slain his man, 'how did you despatch him? Did you shoot the ruffian, or batter his brains out with the butt-end of your gun?'

'What ruffian? O, yes, we shot him; we shot him like a dog!' said the midshipman, with a burst of inane laughter.

Herakles explained, as soon as this had subsided, that, on nearing the Arab tent, a fearsome animal of the boarhound species burst upon them from the thicket, and made at the midshipman with distended jaws. Its sudden appearance, coupled with its appalling growls and barks, was

enough, Herakles assured the Doctor apologetically, to have made the stoutest heart quail. 'We had to shoot him in self-defence.'

But, as ill-luck would have it, the owner of the hound, hearing the shots, made his appearance just in time to witness the *coup de grâce*; and, in spite of a lavish bestowal of the benediction, refused to be comforted. He cursed the Giaours by his gods, quite beating Herakles and his anathema out of the field. He fairly danced with rage, flourishing the while an alarming agricultural implement of the hoe species, as though he would have liked to offer up the midshipman as a sacrifice to the manes of his departed dog.

'So we concluded to travel, and here we are,' finished the narrator.

'But,' asked the Doctor, 'you don't think he will bring his tribe upon us in the still watches of the night, and wreak a fearful vengeance upon our devoted heads?'

Herakles couldn't say, and an uncomfortable feeling of insecurity was in consequence introduced.

'I perceive,' said the midshipman, joining the group after a minute's absence, 'that the dragoon is one of those persons mentioned in Scripture, who rise up early in the morning to follow strong drink.'

'You don't mean to say the man's in liquor?' said his hearers, aghast.

'On the contrary, my friends, the liquor is in the man; and what's worse, it is our own Kinahan's LL, and he's finished the bottle. Behold the *corpus delicti*!' (holding it upside down.)

'All I can say,' quoth Herakles, 'is, that the man who would engage a dipsomaniac as a guide in these outlandish parts must be

a born fool !' and he looked long and fixedly at the Doctor.

'O, this is so very, *very* like the Doctor !' sighed his reverence. 'We shall find next that the camel-drivers are brigands in disguise.'

'That they are *not* !' said the medico, with emphasis. 'And as to the dragoman being drunk, I don't believe it. He was recommended to me by the Kadi. He is *most* trustworthy.'

'Come and view the body,' interrupted the midshipman, as though we were a coroner's jury.

We passed behind the cactus-hedge. Alas, it was but too true ! There lay the hoary-headed sinner like an Oriental Silenus. He was— But the subject presents few attractions. It is enough to record that if he had been a London costermonger, he would have been locked up as drunk and incapable.

I would here ask the reader to dwell for an instant upon our pitiable situation. We were alone in the wilderness, and the shades of night were falling. We had, like the French soldiery in 1870, lost all confidence in the man of destiny who should have led us to victory. We were thirty miles from the nearest European settlement. We believed ourselves (not unreasonably) to be in a hostile territory,

'Where crouching lions wait their hapless prey,
And savage men, more murderous than they.'

As we stood around that hicoughing tippler, and the dire extremity to which we were reduced presented itself in all its horror to our trembling imaginations, is it to be wondered at that, like the peripatetic descendants of Israel, we should have murmured against our chief ?

'My good friends,' said the

accused, with a sickly smile, 'how was I to know that this man had a weakness for Scotch whisky ?'

'Not much doubt about it ! Why, it's as plain as the nose on his face that he's fond of drink !' replied Herakles, with a pointed allusion to the rubicund proboscis.

As if to mock our miseries, the rain now began to descend in torrents. The night was upon us. The rain would evidently soon prove too much for the embers of the camp-fire, and no tea was made. The iron entered into our very souls ; and no wonder.

The Friar's motion, 'That this expedition do at once return,' was put for a second time ; and, with the amendment, 'As soon as the dragoman be sober enough to guide its erring way,' was carried *nem. con.*

Our meal that night consisted of biscuit, pickles, and *pâté-de-foie-gras*, all smacking strongly of vinous decoctions. We kindled a sickly flame by piling fuzes upon the remnants of the original fire ; but the smoke this fuel emitted was out of all proportion to the comfort we derived from it. Then we rolled ourselves up in such of the vestments as were not already soaked through, and laid us down to sleep. It was a night of horror.

Every half-hour the Doctor would say 'Hush !' in a way to make our blood curdle, while he whispered that he was perfectly certain he could distinguish the shouts of the approaching Bedouins. The Friar, unhappy man, shared this writer's humble rug ; for the pocket surplice, it need scarcely be said, was not a pocket syphonia. Even the Doctor's umbrella did not keep him dry.

It was still long before daylight the next morning, when four

dishevelled figures might have been perceived cramming guns, rugs, eatables, pots, pans, and cart-ridges, pell-mell into their camel-packs. Yes, at 3 A.M., that fateful hour, the dragoman was once more sober, and the expedition was consequently once more free to roam.

But this time, with drooping crests and stiff and aching limbs,

the weary pageant wended towards the coast.

And so, at ten o'clock that night, a mean fishing-boat put alongside the ironclad, carrying all that remained of the nobly-equipped expedition, which had left it the preceding morning. And that was my first and last ride on a camel in the desert of Africa.

'BY TELEGRAM.'

ONLY a boy in the regiment,
Struck by the fierce Indian sun ;
Only a grave to be dug for him,
Now that his young life is done.

Only his comrades to follow him
Home to his soldier's grave ;
Only his memory to rest with them,
Stainless and gentle and brave.

Scathless he came through South Africa,
Bearing his life in his hand ;
Scathless, though bullets rained round him,
To die on the Eastern sand.

Was there no hoary head waiting there,
Weary, and waiting to die ?
Why should Death's greed hunger but for him,
Passing the weary one by ?

Only a heart-broken mother kneels,
Bowed to the dust in her tears ;
How shall she live but to weep for him,
Comfortless through the sad years ?

Only a father's stern agony,
Only a brother's faith tried ;
Would God that we might have died for him—
For him, our hope and our pride !

HALF-HOURS WITH SOME FAMOUS AMBASSADORS.

VII.

HARLEY AND THE COURT OF QUEEN ANNE.

AMONGST the statesmen and diplomatists who shed lustre upon the reign of Queen Anne, Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, occupied a conspicuous place. Yet his career furnishes another example of the instability of human greatness; and while he owed his rise in great measure to his own abilities, he owed his fall in equally large measure to the intrigues of a woman. The ascendancy which the notorious Mrs. Masham acquired over the Queen was as extraordinary as it was undoubtedly supreme. In our times female intrigues have ceased to control in any degree public life; but formerly the most eminent statesmen were obliged in matters of high State policy to consider whether their measures would be agreeable to those favourites of the Sovereign, whose power, if informal, was real. The scenes which took place in the Queen's apartments between Anne and her Ministers, and the favourite Mrs. Masham, would doubtless form a very instructive picture could they be fully realised and set forth at length.

That distinguished Minister—a strange compound of weakness and talent—Robert Harley, unlike many who have risen to eminence in the diplomatic and political career, came of a good family. His father was Sir Edward Harley, and on both sides his ancestors came over with the Conqueror. The future Lord Treasurer was born in Bow-street, Covent Gar-

den, on the 5th of December 1661. He received his education under the care of the Rev. Mr. Birch, at Shilton, near Burford, in Oxfordshire. Were this school in existence now it would need no other advertisement to make it one of the most prosperous of educational establishments than these facts: that it had produced at the same time a Lord High Treasurer, a Lord High Chancellor, a Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and ten members of the House of Commons. Such was the record of Shilton School in Harley's time.

At the Revolution of 1688 Sir Edward Harley and his son Robert raised a troop of horse at their own expense; and after the accession of William and Mary the subject of our article was elected member of Parliament for Tregony, in Cornwall. Subsequently he was returned for Radnor, and for this borough he continued to sit until called to the House of Lords. In 1690 Mr. Harley was chosen by ballot one of the nine members of the House of Commons Commissioners of Public Accounts, and also one of the arbitrators for uniting the two India companies. Four years later the House deputed him to prepare and bring in a Bill 'for the frequent meeting and calling of Parliaments.' The measure was brought in and agreed to by both Houses, the Bill differing from most measures introduced into Parliament in being accepted without alteration or amendment.

It was speedily seen that the member for Radnor was one who could impress a sense of his talents upon all parties, and in 1701 he was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons. Parliament being dissolved the same year, he was again elected Speaker by the new one, and he received the honour a third time on the meeting of the first Parliament called by Queen Anne. A contemporary, remarking upon him in his capacity of Speaker, observed: 'No man understands more the management of the Chair to the advantage of his party, nor knows better all the tricks of the House. He is skilled in most things, and very eloquent; is a very useful man, and for that reason is well with the Ministry.'

Harley's rise was now rapid. In April 1704 he was sworn of her Majesty's Privy Council, and in the following May he became one of the principal Secretaries of State. In the year 1706 he was appointed one of the Commissioners for the treaty of Union with Scotland, which was successfully negotiated and completed.

Although a Whig at heart, he was a Tory Minister. The political jealousies in his day were of the most rancorous character; but in the year just mentioned—1706—Harley gave a grand banquet to the leading Whigs in the hope of cementing an alliance. It seems that the Duke of Marlborough, who was then at the Hague, had received a letter from Godolphin, urging him to draw closer to his recent allies the Whigs, and Marlborough had replied, 'I shall with all my heart live friendly with those that have shown so much friendship to you and service to the Queen.' The dinner given by Harley took place on the 6th of January. There were present, besides Marlborough and Godolphin, Boyle and St. John, Halifax, Sun-

derland, and Cowper. Somers also had been invited, but had gone to his country house. Cowper, in his private diary, has described the scene with much spirit. 'After Lord Treasurer was gone, who first went, Secretary Harley took a glass and drank to love and friendship and everlasting union, and wished he had more Tokay to drink it in; we had drunk two bottles, good, but thick. I replied his white Lisbon was best to drink it in, being very clear. I suppose he apprehended it, as I observed most of the company did, to relate to that humour of his, which was never to deal clearly or openly, but always with reserve, if not dissimulation, or rather simulation, and to love tricks even where not necessary, but from an inward satisfaction he took in applauding his own cunning.'

Burns sings that

'The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley.'

And this was to be proved quickly in Harley's case. At this time the influence of the Duchess of Marlborough over Queen Anne was rapidly waning, and that of Abigail Hill, now Mrs. Masham, was rapidly rising. The latter claimed cousinship to Mr. Harley, and with that statesman she was in constant and familiar communication. The belief was consequently strongly fostered that whatever influence Mrs. Masham might gain over her royal mistress would be exerted in pursuance of her kinsman's counsels and in promotion of his power. This roused the suspicions of Godolphin and the Marlboroughs. They also began to doubt his political honour and fidelity, and an incident which happened at this juncture told badly against Harley, and strengthened the ill-feeling of his enemies. A clerk named Gregg, who

had been employed by Harley as a spy in Scotland and elsewhere, had entered into a treasonable correspondence with M. de Chamillart, the French Secretary of State. He was accustomed to slip his letters into the packets which Marshal Tallard, as a prisoner in England, used to send unsealed to the Secretary's office, to be there examined and then forwarded. One of these packets, being opened on suspicion in Holland, was found to contain the copy of a draft transmitted by Gregg of a letter which it was designed the Queen should write in her own hand to the Emperor, requesting him, according to the wish expressed in Parliament, to appoint Prince Eugene in Spain. Gregg had been able even in the copy to mark those passages first written by Harley as Secretary of State, and others added by Godolphin as Prime Minister. Gregg was convicted of treason and sentenced to death. Two smugglers who had also been in the pay of Harley as spies had betrayed his confidence by carrying counter-tidings to the French, and the heavy losses the English had sustained at sea were set down to their treachery.

Godolphin and Marlborough threatened to resign, but Harley, who was regarded with special favour by the Queen, protested that he had no other wish than to continue honestly the coalition between the moderate Tories and the moderate Whigs. On Sunday, the 8th of February, as the Queen went to preside over the Cabinet Council, she was waited upon by Godolphin and Marlborough, who stated that, as Harley was still continued in office, they could not attend the Cabinet, nor take any further part as her Majesty's Ministers. Anne suffered them to depart, and went on to the Council. When Harley began the business of his depart-

ment, he saw by the faces of his colleagues that there was mischief on foot. No business was done. The discontented lords now resolved to examine the convicted man Gregg, with the hope of involving Harley in a criminal charge. In this, however, they failed, Gregg swearing, as he should answer before the judgment-seat of Christ, that Harley was not privy to his writing to France, either directly or indirectly. But party rage continued to spread, and in the end Harley was driven to resign, the 'all-accomplished St. John,' who was then Secretary at War, retiring with him.

In retirement Harley continued to work assiduously, though secretly, upon the Queen through Mrs. Masham; and ultimately he had his triumph. Anne dismissed Sunderland first, and then Godolphin himself. The latter had foolishly addressed the Queen in unbecoming language, and this fact enabled her the more easily to dismiss the Minister. 'The many unkind turns I have received from you,' she wrote to him, 'and especially what you said to me personally before the lords, make it impossible for me to continue you any longer in my service. But I will give you a pension of 4000*l.* a year; and I desire that, instead of bringing the staff to me, you will break it, which I believe will be easier to us both.' The high office of Treasurer was now placed in commission, but the seals of Chancellor of the Exchequer were given to Harley, who was regarded as being virtually Prime Minister. He endeavoured to secure the aid of some prominent Whigs in the Administration, but failed to attach young Robert Walpole, who was worth more than half his party, he said. Somers, Cowper, and Halifax were also proof against Harley's overtures, although he assured them that he

intended 'a Whig game at bottom.'

A very dramatic attempt to take Harley's life, made in 1711, the year after his preferment, did much to make him popular, and establish his position in the public favour and also in that of the Queen. It appears that there was a French emigrant named the Marquis de Guiscard, who was in receipt of an English pension of 400*l.* at the same time that he was in secret correspondence with the French Government. He had been consulted on several occasions by Godolphin and Marlborough with respect to their projected descent upon Languedoc and Picardy, but his counsels were neglected. Enraged at this, and further incensed at the reduction of his pension by Harley, he resolved upon a signal act of revenge. He wrote secret letters to Paris, offering to make his peace, and disclosing whatever he knew. These letters were fortunately intercepted, and a warrant for high treason was issued against Guiscard by Secretary St. John. On the 8th of March he was apprehended in St. James's Park, and being conveyed to the Cock-pit, and hopeless of a pardon, he secured a penknife which he observed on a standish in the room. This he secreted unperceived by the messengers who watched him.

Taken next before the Lords of the Council, he was confronted with his letters from Paris, and convicted by his own handwriting. Being now desperate, he desired, it was believed, to kill St. John, who had issued the warrant for his arrest; but as St. John sat out of his reach, he suddenly stooped down over Harley, and with a cry, 'J'en veux donc à toi!' drew out the penknife and stabbed him in the breast. The blade broke in the wound about half an inch from the handle, which Guiscard not

perceiving redoubled the blow. St. John, seeing the Prime Minister fall, cried out, 'The villain has killed Mr. Harley!' and drawing his sword, as did also the Duke of Newcastle and some more, they dealt Guiscard several wounds. Two lords secured themselves with chairs against the assassin, while two others deemed discretion the better part of valour, and fled. Guiscard was at last secured by being grappled with and brought to the ground.

Harley behaved himself with great firmness and composure. St. John, in describing his bearing, wrote, 'I, who have always admired him, never did it so much. The suddenness of the blow, the sharpness of the wound, the confusion which followed, could neither change his countenance nor alter his voice.' The surgeon who examined the wound found that if it had been an inch lower it would have touched the diaphragm, and if it had been a nail's breadth deeper it must have reached his heart. Harley inquired whether the wound was mortal, in order that he might know whether to settle his affairs; but he exhibited no unusual elation when it was discovered that it was not. He took the broken blade out himself, and having wiped it, called for the handle, and said, 'They belong to me.' His would-be assassin, Guiscard, died of his wounds, or rather of gangrene, which had resulted therefrom.

The wound which Harley received brought on a fever, and this confined him to the house for some weeks. When the House of Commons was informed that he was almost well, and that in a few days he would come abroad again, it was resolved to congratulate him upon his escape and recovery. Accordingly, upon his attending the House on the 26th of April,

the Speaker, Mr. Bromley, addressed him in a flattering speech, in which he prayed 'that the same Providence that had wonderfully preserved him from some unparalleled attempts, and had raised him up to be an instrument of great good at a very critical juncture when it was much wanted, might continue still to preserve so invaluable a life for the perfecting of what was so happily begun, that they might owe to his counsels and to his conduct the maintenance and firm establishment of our constitution in Church and State.' Harley made a suitable reply to the Speaker's oration. The news of the outrage excited great sympathy, and both Houses combined in an address to the Queen, stating their concern at 'this barbarous and villanous attempt,' insisting on the fact that Guiscard was a French Papist; and, in conclusion, urging her Majesty 'to give such directions as in your great wisdom shall seem most proper for causing Papists to be removed from the cities of London and Westminster.' In accordance with this prayer, the Queen issued a proclamation strictly to put in force the laws against the Papists; and the two Houses at once passed a Bill making an attempt on the life of a Privy Councillor in the execution of his office to be felony without benefit of clergy.

Harley's star was now in the ascendant, indeed; and on the very day that he brought forward a broad scheme of financial reform in the House of Commons, fortune further favoured him by the death of his only possible rival in his party's favour, the Earl of Rochester. The elevation of the successful statesman to the peerage quickly ensued. On the 24th of May 1711, Harley was created Earl of Oxford, thus reviving an ancient and illustrious title, which had

been borne by twenty earls between the years 1137 and 1702. But in order to provide for the contingency of a claimant appearing to a title which had but so recently lapsed, the second title of Mortimer was also conferred upon the statesman. The reasons which induced her Majesty to create Harley a peer were thus stated in a contemporary document published in the *Harleian Miscellany*: 'Whatever favour may be merited from a just prince by a man born of an illustrious and very ancient family, fitted by nature for great things, and by all sorts of learning qualified for greater; constantly employed in the study of State affairs, and with the greatest praise, and no small danger, exercising variety of offices in the Government,—so much does our well-beloved and very faithful counsellor, Robert Harley, deserve at our hands—he who, in three successive Parliaments, was unanimously chosen Speaker; and, at the same time that he filled the Chair, was our principal Secretary of State, in nowise unequal to either province. Places so seemingly disagreeing were easily reconciled by one who knew how, with equal weight and address, to moderate and govern the minds of men; one who could preserve the rights of the people without infringing the prerogative of the Crown; and who thoroughly understood how well Government could consist with liberty. This double task being performed, after some short respite, he bore the weight of our exchequer as Chancellor, and thereby prevented the further plundering the nation, and also provided for the settling a new trade to the South Seas, and (by rescuing public credit) so opportunely relieved the languishing condition of the Treasury, as to deserve thanks from the Parlia-

ment, blessings from the citizens, and from us (who never separate our own interests from the public) no small approbation. Therefore, we decree to the man that has so eminently deserved of us, and of all our subjects, those honours which were long since due to him and his family, being induced thereto by our own good pleasure, and the suffrage of all Great Britain. For we take it as an admonition that he should not in vain be preserved whom the States of our realm have testified to be obnoxious to the hatred of wicked men, upon account of his most faithful services to us, and whom they have congratulated upon his escape from the rage of a flagitious parricide. We gladly indulge their wishes, that he who is himself learned, and a patron of learning, should happily take his title from that city where letters do so gloriously flourish.'

On the 29th of May 1711, Oxford was advanced to the further dignity of Lord Treasurer. He was destined to be the last occupant of that office, the style being afterwards changed to that of First Minister of the Crown, or Prime Minister. Having first taken the oaths in the Court of Chancery, he went to fulfil the same duty in the Court of Exchequer, when he was addressed in the following high-flown language by Lord Keeper Harcourt: 'My Lord Oxford, the Queen, who does everything with the greatest wisdom, has given a proof of it in the honours she has lately conferred on you, which are exactly suited to your deserts and qualifications.' The great rise of Harley led Swift to say: 'This man has grown by persecutions, turnings-out, and stabbing. What waiting and crowding and bowing there will be at his *levée*!' Oxford also received the Garter; and at a

general court of the South Sea Company he was chosen their Governor, as he had been their founder and chief regulator.

But before the year in which he attained his highest honours closed, difficulties arose in connection with the treaty for a general peace. The war party carried a motion in the Lords against an important clause in the treaty, and things began to look serious for the Oxford and St. John Ministry. Their friends began to think they could not possibly continue in power. Swift wrote to a friend that he looked upon them as certainly ruined; for Matthew Prior, who ought to know, had given up all for gone. Oxford, however, still bore himself with bravado: and one of the foreign representatives wrote to a French diplomatist: 'My Lord Treasurer bids me assure you that you may rely, in the most positive manner, upon his firmness; that he will write to you in eight or ten days, and that you shall see the full effect of his promises and of his determination.' Oxford created a large number of new peers, to strengthen himself in the Upper House; and on one occasion a motion having been carried by a majority of no more than thirteen, including the twelve new peers, Lord Wharton sarcastically asked them whether they would vote singly or through their foreman.

Our army in Flanders not acting with the vigour which the country expected, resolutions on the subject were brought forward in both Houses. In the Lords, Oxford defended himself and the troops by saying, that though the Duke of Ormond might have refused to hazard a general action, yet he could be positive he would not decline joining with the allies in a siege, orders having been sent him for that purpose. Marlborough severely con-

demned these extraordinary tactics. At a later period the Treasurer was pressed to make known the intentions of the Government with regard to the whole war; and some lords expressed their apprehensions of a separate peace. 'Nothing of that nature,' Oxford replied, 'was ever designed.' Such a peace would be so base, so knavish, and so villanous a thing, that every servant of the Queen must answer for it with his head to the nation.' He also gave the assurance, 'The allies know of our proceedings, and are satisfied with them.'

Upon the conclusion of the harassing session of 1712, St. John was elevated to the peerage; but the rank conferred upon him was not so high a one as his friends anticipated. It was known that the statesman himself desired to revive the extinct Earldom of Bolingbroke; but this would have given him as high a title as Harley, and that the Lord Treasurer could not stand. In order to mark his own supremacy in the Cabinet, he insisted with the Queen that St. John should receive no higher rank than that of viscount, and he was accordingly created Viscount Bolingbroke. It was at this time also, still further to mark his supremacy, that Harley conferred upon himself, through the Queen, the Order of the Garter.

We may pause here to consider for a moment Oxford in another character, and one which does him greater honour, viz. as the friend of men of letters. He resembled Bolingbroke and Somers in this. 'With men of genius of whatever rank,' says Lord Stanhope, 'they lived not on the footing of chiefs or patrons, but on equal terms as friends. All state or ostentation was avoided. Thus, when Harley was created Earl of Oxford he would not for some time allow

Swift to call him by his new title, and whenever Swift did so Oxford gave a jesting nickname in return. Thus also one day at Court, when Oxford as Lord Treasurer was in State attire, and held the white staff in his hand, he walked up through the crowd of courtiers to Swift, and asked to be made known to Dr. Parnell, who was standing by. "I value myself," says Swift, "upon making the Ministry desire to be acquainted with Parnell, and not Parnell with the Ministry." Indeed, there was perhaps no man of his time more genial, more truly at home with men of genius, more thoroughly enjoying their converse and desirous of their friendship, than this the last of the Lord Treasurers of England. They were not ungrateful, and through their means it has happened that while Harley is but little to be valued or honoured as a statesman, he shines in history with a lustre not his own. Certainly if he showed favour to the Muses, the debt has been most amply repaid.'

We may quote, as one example of the truth of the last observation, the lines in which Pope (in a dedicatory epistle to Parnell's poems) thus refers to Lord Oxford, after his imprisonment in the Tower, and his subsequent retreat into the country:

'In vain to deserts thy retreat is made;
The Muse attends thee to thy silent
shade; [trace,
'Tis hers the brave man's latest steps to
Rejudge his acts, and dignify disgrace.
When Interest calls off all her sneaking
train,
And all the obliged desert, and all the
vain;
She waits, or to the scaffold, or the cell,
When the last lingering friend has bid
farewell.
Ev'n now she shades thy evening walk
with bays
(No hireling she, no prostitute to praise)
Ev'n now, observant of the parting ray,
Eyes the calm sunset of thy various day;
Through Fortune's cloud one truly great
can see,
Nor fears to tell that Mortimer is he.'

When the peace of Utrecht had been signed the attention of Englishmen was centred in the question of the succession to the Crown. Oxford, though appealed to again and again for being dilatory in this question, still hesitated to move definitely. He gave contradictory advice to the Jacobites, and both Marshal Berwick and the Pretender were at length driven to the conclusion that the Treasurer's view was chiefly his own maintenance in power, and that he had no serious intention of assisting them. Nobody could tell precisely what his views were, though many believed him to be at heart in favour of the house of Hanover. Bolingbroke, on the contrary, let no opportunity be lost of showing that he was an ardent friend of the Jacobites, so that there were two parties in the Ministry—one decided, and the other undecided. Oxford was in favour of saying smooth things in order to get matters over quietly in any great crisis; so he himself remarked, 'If the company should say Harrow-on-the-Hill or Maidenhead were the nearest way to Windsor, I would go with them and never dispute it, if that would give content, and I might not be forced to swear it was so.' Yet Bolingbroke and others complained of his reticence and want of confidence; they could get nothing satisfactory out of him at the most important moments.

Upon occasion, Oxford could play absolutely two parts, as in the case of a pamphlet written by Swift, and entitled 'The Public Spirit of the Whigs.' Though this pamphlet was anonymous, it was well known to be Swift's; but the writer, screening himself, allowed the printer and publisher to be made his victims. The House of Lords, in condemning the pamphlet, regarded it as a bitter

and insulting attack upon the whole Scotch nation in treating of the Union. The Lord Treasurer protested he knew nothing of the pamphlet, exclaimed against the malicious insinuations contained in it, and readily joined in an order for committing the publisher and printer to the custody of the Black Rod. But at the very time he professed this ignorance of the author of the pamphlet, Oxford wrote a letter to Swift, in a feigned hand, expressing his sympathy, and enclosing a bill for 100*l*. 'I have heard,' he said, 'that some honest men who are very innocent are under trouble touching a printed pamphlet. A friend of mine, an obscure person, but charitable, puts the enclosed bill in your hands to answer such exigencies as their case may immediately require. And I find he will do more, this being only for the present.' The Scotch lords made strong efforts to get at the writer of the pamphlet, whom they knew to be Swift; but owing to the artifices of Oxford nothing came of the matter, and the storm blew over.

But by the middle of the year 1714 it became obvious that Oxford was tottering to his fall. Complaints were rising against him on all hands, and the breach between himself and Bolingbroke had grown too wide to be bridged over. Swift endeavoured to reconcile the two friends, and induced them to meet at Lady Masham's, when he vainly counselled union. As his remonstrances were unavailing, and unwilling to side against either of his patrons, he decided to cease his counsels, and to leave town. Bolingbroke thought Swift in the right. The latter went into Berkshire, and on his departure the fate of Oxford was practically sealed.

At this time, moreover, Lady

Masham, whose husband had been made a peer by Harley, turned against her patron. She was still the chief favourite at Court, and had become the close friend of Bolingbroke and the Jacobites. She went so far as to say to Oxford to his face, 'You never did the Queen any service, nor are you capable of doing her any.' After such language it is extraordinary that Oxford should have bowed his neck to the yoke so far as to go and sup with the woman who had insulted him. Oxford now wrote a letter to the Queen, containing a detail of the public transactions, in the course of which he endeavoured to justify his own conduct, and expose the turbulent and ambitious spirit of his brilliant rival Bolingbroke. One passage in this letter reads as follows: 'After the session of 1712 was ended, the Queen, as she had promised, ordered a warrant for Mr. Secretary St. John to be a viscount; this happened to put him in the utmost rage against the Treasurer and Lady Masham, and without sparing the greatest. It did avail very little to tell him how much he had got in place; for had he been created with the other lords it would have fallen to his share to have come next after Lord Trevor; but the Treasurer, with great patience, bore all the storm, of which Lord Masham was often a witness of the outrageous speeches; and Mr. Moore very lately told the Treasurer that Lord Bolingbroke said very lately to him that he owed him a revenge upon that head. This discontent continued, until there happened an opportunity of sending him to France, of which there was not much occasion; but it was hoped that this would have put him in good humour, which it did, until in October 1712 there were Knights of the Garter made.

This created a new disturbance, which is too well remembered, and breaks out now very often in outrageous expressions publicly against all then made.'

Bolingbroke retorted, charging the Treasurer with having invited the Duke of Marlborough to return from his voluntary exile, and maintained a private correspondence with the house of Hanover; and the Duke of Shrewsbury likewise complained of his having presumed to send orders to him in Ireland without the privy of her Majesty and the Council. But Lady Masham was his most powerful foe; and on the 27th of July a very acrimonious dialogue occurred between that lady, the Chancellor, and Oxford in the Queen's presence. The Treasurer affirmed that he had been wronged and abused by lies and misrepresentations; but he threatened vengeance, declaring he would leave some people as low as he had found them when they had first attracted his notice. The Queen detailed some of the grounds of her own displeasure with Oxford—his close confidant, Lewis, being obliged to admit the truth of some of them—and the altercation lasted till two o'clock in the morning.

The scene closed with the dismissal of Oxford by her Majesty. She resumed the white staff, and the victory remained with Lady Masham and Bolingbroke. Lewis, writing to Swift upon the fall of his patron, said: 'The Queen has told all the Lords the reasons of her parting with him (Oxford)—viz. that he neglected all business; that he was very seldom to be understood; that, when he did explain himself, she could not believe in the truth of what he said; that he never came to her at the time she appointed; that he often came drunk; lastly, to crown all, that

he behaved himself towards her with bad manners, indecency, and disrespect—*pudet hæc opprobria nobis*, &c. I am distracted with the thoughts of this, and the pride of the conqueror.' The fall was most complete, yet we must suppose, with Lord Keeper Harcourt, that the Queen did everything 'with the highest wisdom,' and was as judicious in unmaking the Earl as she was originally in making him. It is a curious commentary upon these high State affairs to find it stated that the last straw which broke the Treasurer's back was his refusal to give Lady Masham a good round sum as part of the plunder made from a contract!

A still more serious trial was in store for the fallen statesman. The House of Commons resolved early in June 1715 to impeach him of high treason and of high crimes and misdemeanours. On the 9th of July Lord Coningsby, followed by a great part of the Lower House, brought up to the Bar of the Lords sixteen articles of impeachment against the Earl, to which six others were afterwards added. The first fifteen referred to the peace of Utrecht, and the sixteenth to the creation of peers. A debate ensued whether any of the articles amounted to high treason, and it was proposed to consult the judges; but a motion to that effect was lost by eighty-four to fifty-two. When it was next proposed to commit Oxford to the Tower, the Earl rose and addressed the House in a short speech, protesting his innocence, and pleading privilege in that he had only obeyed the positive orders of the Queen. 'My lords,' he urged, 'if Ministers of State, acting by the immediate commands of their Sovereign, are afterwards to be made accountable for their proceedings, it may, one day or other,

be the case with all the members of this august assembly. I am now to take my leave of your lordships and of this honourable House, perhaps for ever. I shall lay down my life with pleasure in a cause favoured by my late dear royal mistress; and, when I consider that I am to be judged by the justice, honour, and virtue of my peers, I shall acquiesce, and retire with great content. And, my lords, God's will be done!' His lordship was committed to the Tower, though, owing to indisposition, the order was not carried into effect for a few days.

Oxford lay in the Tower till the 24th of June, when he was brought to Westminster Hall, where the Peers had assembled for his trial, and where the King, the Royal Family, and the foreign Ministers were seated around as spectators. The Earl stood bareheaded at the bar, with the fatal axe before him. When the proceedings had progressed for some time, their lordships adjourned to their own House, for the purpose of discussing Lord Harcourt's motion that the House should receive no evidence on the charges for misdemeanours until after the charges of high treason were determined, it being generally conceded by the Privy Council that there was not sufficient evidence to convict Lord Oxford of the greater crime. The motion was opposed by Sunderland and other leaders; but as it was supported by the whole body of the Tories, and by the influence of the late Whig Premier, it was carried by a majority of eighty-eight against fifty-six. The House of Commons regarded this motion as an infringement of their privileges, and refused to comply with it. The quarrel which now ensued between the two Houses exactly suited Oxford and his friends.

The Lords appointed the 1st of

July for the trial; but the exasperated Commons would not go on with the prosecution under the terms imposed by the Upper House. The result was that when the Lords assembled in Westminster Hall no prosecutor appeared; and the noble judges, after waiting a quarter of an hour, returned to their own House. It was there proposed that as no charge had been maintained against Robert, Earl of Oxford, and Earl Mortimer, he should be acquitted; and this motion was carried—a sentence which was warmly cheered by the multitude outside. ‘The acclamations,’ wrote Erasmus Lewis to Swift, ‘were as great as upon any occasion; and our friend, who seems more formed for adversity than prosperity, has at present many more friends than ever he had before in any part of his life. I believe he will not have the fewer from a message he received this morning from the King by my Lord Chamberlain to forbid him the Court.’

The attitude of the Marlboroughs during this memorable trial was singular and worthy of note. The Duke secretly desired the acquittal of Oxford, and worked for that end—his conduct being sharpened by the knowledge that the impeached Earl had obtained possession of a letter signed by the Duke before the death of Queen Anne, in favour of the Pretender, which letter Oxford threatened to publish if driven to extremity. But whether this letter was in existence or not, Marlborough had certainly communications with the exiled family. The Duchess of Marlborough had an inveterate hatred of Oxford, and was determined, if it could possibly be accomplished, to secure his conviction; and the Duke being, as was well known, under petticoat government, his Grace had a very difficult part to play.

When the Earl was acquitted, the Duchess was almost distracted with rage that she was unable to obtain her revenge.

An important fact in connection with Oxford was established by a letter amongst the Stuart papers. It seems that, stung with indignation at the harsh treatment he had received from the house of Hanover, he wrote from the Tower to the Pretender offering his services, and giving his advice on the management of Jacobite affairs.

Lord Oxford lived for barely seven years after his acquittal by the Lords. He died on the 21st of May 1724, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. It is impossible not to give him the highest praise as a liberal patron of literature and the arts. He was the greatest collector in his time of all curious books in print and manuscript, especially those concerning the history of Great Britain. These were preserved and considerably augmented by his son, the second earl, and were afterwards purchased for the British Museum. His printed books, however, were most unfortunately dispersed. The Earl was likewise a man of letters and taste himself, and under this character Swift addressed to him a proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English tongue. In 1710 his lordship wrote *An Essay upon Public Credit*, which was inserted in ‘Somers’ Tracts;’ and there are two other works said to have been written by him, and entitled *An Essay upon Loans*, and *A Vindication of the Rights of the Commons of England*. Several of his letters are preserved among the Harleian mss., and certain amusing verses of his were included in the correspondence between Swift and his friends.

Probably the best characterisation of the Earl of Oxford and

Mortimer is to be found in the pages of Coxe. 'Oxford,' observes this interesting writer, 'was unimpeachable in his private character, never offending against morality either in conversation or action, a tender husband, and a good father; highly disinterested and generous. He prided himself on his high descent, was stiff and formal in his deportment, and forbidding in his manner. He was learned and pedantic; embarrassed and inelegant both in speaking and writing. He was equally an enemy to pleasure and business; extremely dilatory and fond of procrastination; timid in public affairs, yet intrepid when his own person was concerned; jealous of power, indefatigable in promoting the petty intrigues of the Court, but negligent in things of importance; a Whig in his heart, and a Tory from ambition; too ready for temporary convenience to adopt measures he disapproved, yet unwilling wholly to sacrifice his real sentiments to interest or party; affecting the most profound secrecy in all political transactions, and mysterious in the most trifling occurrences. He was liberal in making promises, yet breaking them without scruple, a defect which arose more from facility of temper than from design. He corresponded at the same time with the dethroned family and the

house of Hanover, and was therefore neither trusted nor respected by either party. The only point in which he and his colleague Bolingbroke agreed was the love of literature and the patronage of learned men, which rendered their administration illustrious.'

The cardinal sin of Harley as a politician was undoubtedly vacillation. A man had better make mistakes in being bold and original than attempt to trim his sails in times of great crises. At one time this statesman was powerful beyond even the manner of Prime Ministers, but he lost his position through weakness and irresolution.

He was not great in the higher sense of statesmanship, because such greatness is incompatible with an effort to sway both leading parties in the State by pleasing them. He had neither the audacity nor the ability of Bolingbroke, but with more caution he might have circumvented that able, yet reckless, statesman. Lacking this caution—upon the possession of which he nevertheless prided himself—he fell before his enemies. And so the last of the long line of Lord Treasurers of England came to be disgraced at the Court which he had long ruled, and to be put upon his trial for high treason before his peers, many of whom owed their very elevation to his favour.

LADY BEAUTY.

Book the Sixth.

LADY BEAUTY'S JOY.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE TIMEPIECE OF ONE GAY LIFE BEGINS TO STRIKE THE
MIDNIGHT QUARTERS.

SOPHIA found her mother seated on the edge of the bed, pale and exhausted, but with nothing about her to account for her maid's sudden excitement. The old woman passed her hand feebly across her forehead, trying, it seemed, to collect her thoughts, and then began to speak.

'Have I been asleep? I must have been asleep! Where is Jones? Did I not see her here? O Sophy, I have had such an odd dream! I thought there was a ball here—in this room; and yet my bed was here too, and I lying on it; and between the dances a girl in a blue dress whose face I could not see came and sat on the bedside, and she had a lover with her; and they were toying and kissing, and then I called out something and afterwards awoke. I suppose I awoke. I had not known I was asleep.'

The maid subsequently told Sophia that, so far as she knew, her mistress had not been asleep at all; that all of a sudden she began to call out very loud, as if she were scolding; and that in the midst of a torrent of words she became deadly pale and seemed to faint away. Seeing this, the maid had rushed off for Sophia, and upon their return the old woman was come to herself, and sitting down as Sophia had found her. The doctor being sent for, made the usual inquiries and examinations, and ordered his patient to bed for a day or two, saying that she had overtaxed her strength; but when alone with Sophia he told her that there had evidently been an attack in the brain, which might be the forerunner of something very grave, or might be only a symptom of weakness and old age.

'The latter, I think,' he said as he was leaving; 'your mother is a very aged person, I should fancy, and her last decay has probably begun. How long she may live no one can say; but she will not be the same woman again, and the rest of her life will be going downhill, how fast or how slow depends on her constitution and our care.'

'I told you, Sophy, that I felt a little shaken,' the old woman said, when her daughter came back to her bedside. 'Don't you remember what I said about the peach-trees? A little rest, Sophy, will set me up—a little rest. I have had a hard life of it, enjoying myself; I don't feel tired of that in the least, but every one wants rest sometimes.'

There followed the contraction of life which is the sure token of advancing age. Old Mrs. Temple got up late; she seldom drove out, and then only at the sunniest hours; and she had all through the day her little delicacies—turtle-soup in tablespoons, champagne in tiny glasses, and all the usual dainty forms of nourishment for wasting lives. Sophia remarked, however, that her mother was more than ever solicitous about expense.

'I declare it is a sin to be eating this soup,' she would say. 'How much is this a quart?—a guinea, I daresay. And as to sending to Gunter's, Sophy, it is waste, sinful waste. You would get it quite as good at the confectioner's here. Fancy if I went on with champagne and turtle at this rate for a year or two, why, money would come to an end, Sophy—money would come to an end!'

Everything pointed in one direction: Mrs. Temple was living on capital; and she dreaded the approaching exhaustion of her means. Sophia tried to get some knowledge of her affairs.

'Could not I do that for you, mamma?' she asked one day, as the old woman was figuring over her bank-book.

'You, Sophy!' she answered, with a gleam of her former vivacity. 'You dear child! you would not know which side is which—which is the mother and which the banker.'

'Let Archibald help you, then,' Sophia rejoined.

'Archibald, indeed!' the old woman exclaimed. 'That great man stooping to my little bit of business would be like a camel trying to get through a needle's eye. No, thank you.'

Elsewhere, too, some gleams of her old spirit broke through the clouds of weakness and illness, but Sophia, watching her narrowly, thought the vivacity only assumed. Even now she fancied she could discern a look of deeper care on the old woman's face as she returned to her calculations. Next day they drove to the bank, and feeble as Mrs. Temple was, she insisted on going in alone; and she had a long interview with the manager. When she came out she showed Sophia a roll of notes.

'Two hundred and fifty pounds, Sophy,' she said. 'I shall put it in my drawer, and if I am not able to get out again this winter there will be money enough to go on with. I don't wish any one to go to the bank about my business again—mind that; and you need not pay any bills just at present. What ready money is wanted we can take out of this.'

All this was alarming to Sophia. She was not the girl to give way to covetousness at a time like this ; but who, without uneasiness, could face the prospect of supplies perhaps suddenly cut off at the most trying juncture ? As to herself, Sophia did not feel much anxiety. Had Percival continued true to her, how gladly she would have put any fortune she might have inherited into his hands to repair his loss ! but now she was not interested enough in life to fear poverty. Beyond care for her mother, she imagined there was nothing to live for. She had tried even after Mrs. Hands' visit to disbelieve the reports which had seemed so fatally authenticated ; but the very next day Sibyl told her that she too had heard from another quarter the most indifferent account of Percival. At this Sophia became hopeless. It was curious that the only person to whom she said anything about her trouble was Prendergast. Whatever had passed at the time of his proposal had set up something like an intimacy between them ; and one day when he called, noticing that she looked pale, he made some remark upon the trial her mother's illness must be.

'It is not mamma,' she replied—'that I could bear ; but O, I feel so weary and sick ! I have heard such dreadful things about the man I believed loved me. Have you heard anything ? O, do you believe it all ?'

'I am afraid Brent has forgotten himself,' Prendergast replied gravely, and said no more.

Meanwhile her sisters, with the above exception, maintained on the subject an ominous and dreary silence ; and her mother, whom she carefully kept in ignorance of the reports, never mentioned Percival's name. So poor Sophia, with her broken hopes, went her dull round from day to day, nursing her mother, and communing with her own sad heart, and there was not one ray of cheerfulness in her life. She grew pale and worn ; and though she tried to be cheerful, every one could see that care was eating her spirit and strength away. Certainly the contrast of her appearance with that of Caroline, or even with that of Sibyl, was a warning against living for an idea in this worldly world. The other sisters might not indeed have grasped the whole substance—in this life who does ? But Sophia's very shadow had vanished away, and she was quite alone, and destitute not only of pleasure, but of illusion too.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE, IN THE CHARACTER OF ECCLESIASTES (NEW VERSION), DELIVERS A FAREWELL SERMON ON LIFE.

WINTER darkened on apace, and while the old woman's health more visibly declined, Sophia was pained to find that she would not allow the idea of death to near her. From occasional remarks

that she let fall, it seemed that Mrs. Temple was wilfully maintaining this delusion of returning strength, with an under-current of conviction that she was to die after all. But to Sophia she always spoke as if her recovery were a certainty; and she even said one day: 'Next year I shall go to Paris, and the year after that to Vienna.'

'Mamma,' Sophia said seriously, when she heard this extraordinary speech, 'next year! and the year after that! Does it never strike you how uncertain life is?'

'Of course life is uncertain,' the old woman replied briskly. 'I never knew the time when it was anything else. But we must make our arrangements, and then take our chance. You were taught to dance when you were seven years old, although you would not require it for nine years more; and life was as uncertain then as now. Still, it would never have done not to have taught you to dance.'

'Yes, but when one is weak and sick these things seem to come nearer, don't they, mamma?' Sophia said, with the greatest tenderness.

'Seem to come, Sophy! They do come nearer. I wish they did not. But that is no reason why we should bring them nearer still by our own reflections and guesses.'

'But, mamma,' Sophia said, now resolved to press the matter, 'ought we not at such times to think a little about the other world, and prepare for it?'

'Prepare for the other world!' the old woman exclaimed impatiently. 'Tell me, how shall we do it? You talk as if one could make ready for the other world like a flower-show or a ball. I don't know anything about the other world. I hope everything will be right; but there is nothing I can do.'

'See a clergyman, mamma,' Sophia said, growing timid before her mother's unwearied hardness. 'See Mr. Knox. He is very kind, I am sure, and not the sort of man to excite you.'

'Very well, Sophy,' her mother retorted, getting a little flushed with excitement, but speaking with sarcastic self-repression. 'Let us suppose Mr. Knox comes to see me. I can tell you what will happen. He will have a black book with him, which at first he will try to keep out of sight, and he will edge it into view as he is talking about the weather. That will be a signal to me of what is coming. Then he will begin by saying that this is a world full of pain and care and trouble.' She hit off the clergyman's voice exactly, but more, it seemed, from her old habit of ridicule than from any present wish to be flippant. 'If I say what I think, I shall answer, "Not a bit of it; it is a cosy bright world enough, and I never complained of it." Then he will go on and talk about loving the world. "Well," I ought to

say, "I do love it, and never more than now when I am shut out from it." "Yes," he will say, "but people ought to be serious." "Serious!" I shall answer. "Believe me, the person who produces one hearty laugh from another does good in the world. Serious, indeed! give me round faces, not long ones." Won't this be improving talk, Sophy, and do good to me and good to Mr. Knox? Then he will talk about sickness being a blessing; and if I give him my mind, I shall say that sickness is one of the few things I know which is an unmitigated bother and perplexity. Won't that make Knox whistle? He will feel he must put me down; and next he will say we are all sinners. What then? If I say the truth, I shall answer, "I don't see it. I have done my best in life. I have not been a liar, or a thief, or cruel. Enjoyment came to me, and I took it, and what a fool I should have been if I had not taken it! But I have tried to be a good mother and a kind friend, and though I don't mean to say that I have not often been in fault like other people, still I have never done anything to make a fuss about. The Almighty won't judge us for mistakes and little slips of temper, that I am quite sure of. I have always gone to church when I could, and if there is any better way to heaven than that, I don't know it nor anybody else." So please, Sophy, don't have Mr. Knox here; either I say what I do think, and shock him, or I say what I don't think, which is not likely to do any good to anybody.'

'But, mamma,' Sophia went on, 'do you never feel as if you wanted something better than this world? It is very happy and all that while it lasts; but do you *never* wish for another?'

'Never, Sophia!' her mother replied, now with distinct harshness in her voice. 'I have told you a hundred times. I am satisfied with the world, and with other people, and with myself. I tell you I find only one fault with the world—I want it to last, and it won't.'

This reply was delivered in a way that finally closed the conversation, and Sophia never dared again to allude to the subject.

December drew to its close, and she saw that her mother was more and more declining in strength, and that even her insatiable appetite for the world itself was departing. She no longer cared to hear the talk of the town. Her beloved *Morning Post* would lie day after day unopened. The little meals, which she used to take with the eagerness of one who is determined to overcome illness, were now languidly put aside to another hour. She slept more frequently, and everything showed plainly that she was quitting the stage of the world, where, a popular actress indeed, she had so long and so brilliantly figured.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH SOPHIA HAS THREE COUNSELLORS, AND THE LAST LEAF OF A WITTY LIFE IS WRITTEN.

NOR was poor Sophia left alone with her sorrow. We have all friends in this world—some who wish us well, and some who wish us nothing of the kind. Ill-wishers and well-wishers sometimes are equals in making us uneasy. And thus it was with Sophia; for while she was shut up with her mother in the sick house, various persons found opportunity to disturb her with counsel or warning. The indefatigable Mrs. Hands, who had fully made up her mind that the young woman must and should marry young John Done, managed to work her way into the house several times. Sophia now feared and hated the widow in equal parts, although she could not deny that, in telling her the truth about Percival, she had acted the part of a friend.

‘My dear Sophia,’ this energetic dame said, ‘I hear that Brent is coming home—bankrupt, they say; character and cash both gone! I should like to see you comfortably settled before that time, and in a position to treat him as he deserves. Now, while your mother is still living, and able to be comforted, settle yourself, Sophia, settle yourself. My dear, I know one young man at least, who would be at your feet in an hour after the time I told him there was a hope that you would change your mind and say “yes.” I know the young man.’

‘Thank you,’ Sophia replied hastily. Her cheeks were on fire at the bare idea of seeing Percival again. ‘I shall stay with mamma to the last; and I am not going to marry any one.’

‘Certainly not a man who has treated you badly,’ the widow said, resolved to pledge Sophia to this much at least.

‘I am not going to marry anybody,’ Sophia repeated tartly.

She had another counsellor. Egerton, having heard that Percival was returning, ventured to advise Sophia on the whole subject.

‘It is not his being a little wild, Sophia, that I should so much object to,’ he said. ‘We are all that sometimes. I mean all young fellows, not girls, though I said “we.” I had what we call an affair with Miss Johnson at that glove-shop myself many years ago, and it went so far that once or twice we were on the point of going out walking together, and all that sort of thing—you know what I mean, Sophia; but it was the time for the equinoctial gales, and the weather got unsettled and that stopped it; and then I got engaged to Caroline, and she was such a tremendously fine girl that she steadied me. I don’t want to find fault with Percival Brent, who is not half a bad fellow, I think. But you are not the woman for him, Sophia,

that is where it is—you are not the woman for him. In every case a woman ought to be the woman for a man. A man of Percival's sort ought to be engaged to a woman with a whip in her hand. Some of us—I mean the fellows with "go"—want to be influenced, and things to be brought to bear on us, and we want forcible feminine character about us, and the rest of it, and in such cases there is nothing like a woman with a whip in her hand.'

More solemn and weighty words were addressed to the poor heart-sick girl. Goldmore no sooner heard that Percival was coming back than he became sincerely alarmed for Sophia's future.

'I tremble for that girl,' he said to his wife one morning, 'kind, impressible, virtuous as she is. I wish she would accept Prendergast, who is as much in love with her as ever, and to whom fortune will make no difference. I greatly fear—I very greatly fear—that Sophia will be very poor at her mother's death. Everything points that way. But she is the sweetest of girls,' he added, in tones of solemn approval; 'she is a sister you may well be proud of, and she shall never want a brother while I live, Sibyl. She shall live here if she will make this house her home.'

'I don't know that Sophy would care to live here,' Sibyl answered curtly. 'She is fanciful and quixotic. Perhaps she will marry Percival Brent after all.'

'Not after his improper behaviour,' Goldmore remarked, with the solemn morality of a Great Briton.

Sibyl laughed a little.

'Women forgive that sometimes,' she said.

Accordingly Goldmore, in fear of something which he could not quite define to himself, resolved to give Sophia the benefit of his experience of life. His kindness and his good intentions were undoubted, and his words were those of a man who 'knows.'

'Don't be deceived by that soft forgiving heart of yours into marrying a profligate, Sophia,' he said. 'A young man may fall into many errors and come out of them, and be as good as ever, but a profligate *never* returns to the state of his youth. He may seem respectable, but he is never truly restored. He has lost that which he cannot regain. There will always be a hardness and a coarseness about him, and he may any hour relapse into evil ways. Such men make a pretence of reforming when they want to marry, and perhaps even believe themselves reformed; but, Sophia, a profligate can no more reform and be what once he was than a man who has lost an eye can see again as perfectly as when he had two. Be firm, Sophia! Be true to yourself. Hear nothing the young man says.'

Poor Sophia began to cry.

'I am not saying this thoughtlessly, my dear girl,' Goldmore continued, taking her hand. 'I admire a young woman who loves a man and will make a sacrifice for him, and I may take the liberty of assuring you, Sophia (so great is my interest in you), that I had resolved, had the young man been honourable, that no little difficulty of a pecuniary kind should have stood in your way. But now, Sophia,' Goldmore said, with all the magnate upon him once more, 'I must interfere in quite another sort of way.'

Late that night, when weary Sophia stole back to her mother's room she found it dark, for the lamp had gone out.

'Are you awake, mamma?'

'Is that you, Sophia?' the old woman answered, in a clear and singularly collected voice. 'That girl in blue is here again, you see.'

'What, mamma? Where?'

'Here, at the end of the bed, and that young fellow with her. They have been dancing, and came here afterwards. They have not spoken to me, not a word. Only they sit there kissing and laughing. I don't object to laughing or kissing either; only they should not choose this place, where so many people are passing up and down. But, Lord, how young people will go on!'

Time after time during several days the old woman would imagine that the bedroom was a ballroom, and that the girl in blue and her lover were sitting at her bed's end, flirting and misbehaving themselves in a way which tickled the old woman; for she often laughed aloud, and said over and over again,

'Lord! how young people will go on!'

At last, on Christmas-eve, Sophia was sitting beside her, and she spoke all at once in a low penetrating whisper:

'Sophy, I know who that girl is now.'

'Who, mamma?'

'*Myself, dear—myself.*' She uttered this in a whisper of secrecy, low, but intensely clear. 'I saw the face just this moment. And that is Jack Dallimore—"Spider Jack" we used to call him, he was so thin; but he was clever and so handsome! We stole out together during the dance at Lord Mountjoy's. There he is kissing her again! How cold it is! Let us go back; let us go back; let us go back!'

She turned and composed herself to sleep, and all night long she lay placidly. When the doctor came in the morning he found her much weaker, and said she must have brandy every half-hour, for she was sinking fast. But she would take nothing; only slept away, while hour by hour the beating pulse reported failing strength. Sophia, feeling the end was near, sent word to

Car and Sibyl; and the three sisters watched beside her all the afternoon, while Egerton and Goldmore waited down-stairs. The breath grew fainter; fixed lines came out on the mobile face; the three daughters stood round the bed; and the worldly little mother passed without a pang away.

CHAPTER IV.

WHICH YOUNG LOVERS ARE TO PERUSE FOR ANTICIPATION, AND OLD LOVERS FOR RETROSPECT; AND ALL READERS OF 'LONDON SOCIETY' BECAUSE THE ARGUMENT IS 'LADY BEAUTY'S JOY.'

It was about the middle of January. The funeral was over, and Sophia was sitting alone in the little morning-room which



See p. 568.

had been her mother's favourite spot. Car and Sibyl had gone home, and Goldmore was down-stairs in the library examining the old lady's papers, the greater portion of which had only just now been obtained, as her solicitor had been from home. He had arrived half an hour ago, and, together with Goldmore, was going into the affairs. Sophia sat alone, full of foreboding and dreariness. It was after four o'clock; the sky was sullen gray; a mist was rising all round the house. Dreary, dreary world! Sophia's heart went off—as it had done a hundred times every

day for months past—to Australia and Percival, and that odious Mrs. Lanigan. She had in her mind's eye quite a picture of her rival : a tall handsome woman, with free eyes, a high colour, and dark eyebrows and hair. How could Percival have liked such a creature ? Then there was the wonder which had haunted her now for weeks. Would Percival come to see her when he arrived in England ? Would he imagine she did not know ? Could she steel her heart and repel him as she ought ?

So constant had these reflections and questionings been of late, that what followed was a coincidence only in appearance. ' Will Percival come to me ? ' was actually on the tip of that inward tongue with which we soliloquise, when her maid came into the room with an expressive face, saying,

' Gentleman called to see you, miss ; ' adding, in a kind of unofficial whisper, '*it's Mr. Brent, miss !*'

She had heard all the gossip of the town ; but her face and tone signified that if she were mistress and not maid, Percival should be forgiven at once, and more than forgiven shortly. But Sophia was too agitated for observation. Should she say, Not at home ? Engaged ? Cannot see him ? Her heart had almost stopped beating ; but resolved not to let her maid see anything, she said, in as quiet a voice as she could command,

' Show him up.'

She gave one hasty glance in the mirror to see that she was fit to be seen, as girls say. Let female seers prognosticate what they will from it, she did not care to meet Percival—even that fickle and false Percival—looking her worst. Then the door opened, and he was ushered in.

The two stood looking at each other in silence for a moment. He saw her pale, worn, and clad in black. She saw him bearded, weather-burnt, stronger-looking, handsomer than ever. She was ready in her heart-sickness to cast herself in his arms and take her chance. But just then she saw the mark of a cut upon his forehead, and she remembered the accident with Mrs. Lanigan.

Why he had waited that moment I cannot tell. A man never should pause when the woman he loves shows the smallest sign of readiness for his embrace. Perhaps Percival only wished to give the maid time to go down-stairs. It is certain that next moment he sprang forward, with his arms stretched out, to take Sophia to his breast ; but that little space of waiting gave jealousy time to erect a barrier before her heart. She would even then have given the world for his embrace, if but it had been honest ; but perplexed, tortured, and at last fairly mad with jealousy, she turned deadly white, and, sobbing, she cast herself on the couch, where, grasping the satin cushion in her hands in a passion of grief or disappointment—

'O, I can't, I can't, I can't!' she cried, in a heart-broken voice.

The room was half in darkness, and Percival by no means understood the true cause of her agitation. He came to her side, and, kneeling, took her in his arms without a word. She felt his embrace winding about her, so full of strength! she was nothing in his arms! In her wretchedness she felt thankful that he had taken her so. It was not her doing! She was too frail to resist him. And so he drew her gently up until their eyes met again.

Let me tell you a secret, reader. Some men and women—not many—are born in this world who are honest by nature. Earth-sprung honesty I should call theirs, to distinguish it from that which is the result of sound teaching and example. These people are never so awkward as when they are doing anything mean or underhand; and for the rest of their lives their honesty is proclaimed in their aspect. Such was Percival Brent. He was a simple straightforward man, true by instinct, and the idea of having been seriously false to Sophia—or that he could have been suspected of such an offence—had never crossed his mind. And now, as he looked down into her troubled eyes, his own, which were dark brown, and very speaking in their way, beamed out steadfast rays of love and truth. There was a little surprise, a little sadness in the expression; but the clear strong gaze could never have come from any but a true man. Sophia felt it. Before he opened his lips she knew she had misjudged him. Already she was beginning to hate herself for her doubts. A moment longer he gazed at her, not, as it would seem, wishing to hurry her kiss; and she grew so impatient to expiate her fault, that she was going to kiss him first. He gently held her back.

'Sophia,' he said, 'do you remember the day we said good-bye at the Beeches?'

She nodded her head in answer. She could not speak. Her eyes were running over.

'I could not say good-bye. I was too broken—far too broken.'

She pressed his hand to tell him how well she remembered all.

'But,' he continued, in his quiet voice, 'while I held you to my heart I vowed a vow that when I took my lips away from yours, I would never touch a woman's lips again until ours met once more.'

He stopped.

'I understand,' Sophia said to herself, with a sudden flash of new interest in his words. 'He is going to confess to me

about Mrs. Lanigan! I daresay he only flirted with her a bit; and he must have been very lonely in Australia; and no doubt she was very forward—like an actress!

All this ran through her mind, not only faster than it runs from my pen, but faster far, reader, than your eye travels along the line of words. Without a pause, Percival went on:

‘And I have kept that vow, Sophia. I wanted to tell you before I kissed you. You can take your good-bye kiss back again; for the lips have been all your own since then.’

‘O, wait—wait one moment!’ she cried.

She wished to collect herself for the coming joy. Besides, ought she to kiss him with her eyes wet with tears? So she made ready. Then she turned her warm and melting lips upward, and, as she drank his long kiss, she sighed a sigh of rapture too deep for words, almost too deep for thought. ‘I am his, and he is mine.’ O, how that pure embrace rewarded her, in one great spell of bliss, for all her waiting and her pain! She forgot everything but her deep happiness. She was in a trance of joy, and all beside joy faded out of her consciousness. There was neither past nor present, neither hope nor fear, neither wish nor regret—all was merged in the full and blessed now!

I declare I will not have my lovers peeped at for the next few minutes. And I shall tell you nothing at all, but let your fancy paint what passed on that sofa.

Glance back over your own lives. Have you ever had such a moment of love after years of pain? Just recall your own sensations, and leave Percival and Sophia to enjoy theirs undisturbed, as happy lovers should.

Even when their first transports are over there they sit, exchanging at slow intervals one low-spoken sentence for another.

So at full tide on some quiet coast a wave breaks with a low plash of music on the shore, and then there is silence, and then another wave answers in the same murmuring note, as in its turn it lays its head on the golden beach. Or so, deep in the woods at summer noon, when all beside is rest and stillness, one singing-bird trills out a few deep notes of passion, and then the golden stillness recurs, until the mate answers from another tree in notes as laden with music and tenderness. Break, shining sea, wave after wave of joy! Sing, birds of love, and let the voice of your passion go to and fro from breast to breast! And you two pure and faithful hearts, touch each other at last, and tell in what language you please that earthly paradise is here, within your clasping arms.

‘But, Sophia,’ Percival says at last, ‘for what possible reason

did you behave yourself so very oddly when I first came into the room? I really thought you were angry, or frightened. What could you mean by it?

He laughs; but when he looks at her he sees her lower lip give a twitch, and she makes a little shivering noise, as if she were going to burst out crying.

'I suppose you have had so much trouble lately,' he says tenderly. 'Think no more about it, dear.'

She hated herself for her doubts. She would confess all to him. No, she would not. Yes, she would. Then at last she answered,

'It was not my home troubles, Percy. It was—it was—'

'What was it?' It is so sweet to bend over her and question her in this low voice.

'Well, you know, it was—it was—'

He sees that twitch of the lip once more. He sees her eyes move round the room, as if looking for something, but she stops again.

'What *can* it have been?' he asks a third time.

Then all at once she looks up, laughing like a shining April shower, though her voice trembles still.

'It was nothing—nothing in the world, but that I was so delighted to see you, dearest, dearest darling!'

She seals that statement with a kiss. But, my moral young woman, we have caught you telling a decided fib.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH YOU SHALL SEE LADY RIVALS WITH THE SEAS BETWEEN THEM.

AFTER these first transports were over Sophia noticed that her lover spoke in a voice of sadness, and not with the exultation which so joyful a meeting might be supposed to inspire. Sophia at once remembered what she had been told of his ill-fortune, and made no doubt that he was dejected by the thought of it. She could not understand what dejection meant just then, being in so happy a mood that her spirits flew far above every vulgar care.

She had a kind of feeling that all would be well somehow; but she asked her lover tenderly if any anxiety pressed upon him, and he at once told her the truth.

'I have not prospered,' he said sadly. 'Complaint always comes with a bad grace from one who is unsuccessful, but I assure you I have not had a fair chance. The man with whom I was working promised to take me into partnership, and all seemed to go well for a while; but we had a quarrel.'

'About what?' Sophia asked, with keen interest. 'Was

Bessie Warren in the quarrel?' she says to herself. She tosses her head with a little of the triumph of the woman who has won the man. Percival is as unconscious of it as Miss Bessie Warren herself can be.

'O, as to what we quarrelled about, that is not of any great importance,' Percival replied, with a little hesitation. 'A short time after his daughter—'

'So!' Sophia thought; 'I was rather expecting her to come in somewhere here.'

'His daughter,' continued Percival, 'got engaged to another man—'

'To *another* man!' exclaimed Sophia. 'Had she an affair with any one before?'

'How sharp you girls are in love matters!' says plain Percival, not seeing her drift, however.

'It was not exactly an affair; I think she took a liking to a man who would not take a liking to her.'

'Now just tell me,' Sophia said, stopping him here, 'was she pretty?'

'How quick you girls are to ask about each other's faces!' cries plain Percival again. 'She is in Australia, and you here. Pretty or plain, what is it to you?'

'I want to know,' Sophia said, 'and know I shall. Was she pretty?'

'Very pretty indeed,' Percival answers.

'And you say she took a liking to a man who did not take a liking to her?'

'Yes; he did not care for her.'

All through his life Percival never understood why just at this moment Sophia got a little closer to him and pressed his hand so kindly.

'Go on, Percy,' she said; 'tell me more.'

'Well, she engaged herself to another man, and he and I never got on; and then the old man became rather disagreeable, and nothing went right, and it ended in my throwing the thing up; and here I am, Sophia, quite penniless. Indeed, dear, if it had not been for what you hid in that pocket, I should not have been here to-day.'

He stopped and shook his head sadly.

'Never mind, Percy!' Sophia said gaily. 'You are here in safety. Something will turn up for you. Archibald will get you something, I am sure. Archibald makes a pet of me!'

'No,' cries proud Percival, 'I have got the promise of a situation in Sydney—a capital situation too, and out there I shall go, and work my way.'

At this Sophia's face fell, and she was about to speak with

great eagerness, when the maid came in and announced that Goldmore wished to see Sophia in the library. Percival was for going away, but she would not hear of it.

‘It is my house now,’ she said, with a sad smile; ‘you must stay with me a little longer. Wait until I come back.’

With a doubting and fearful heart she descended to the library. She was fully prepared for the worst as regarded her mother’s affairs, and, alas, money had never seemed so precious in her eyes before. Had she but a fortune now, how happy she and Percy might be! She braced herself, however, for the shock which she felt sure was coming, and opened the library-door. Seated at a table, all covered with papers, were her brother-in-law and her mother’s solicitor, and by the candlelight their faces, half shaded and half seen, looked very ominous. To Sophia, at least, everything seemed gloomy. Goldmore rose from his seat solemnly and set a chair for her at the table, and then with his usual three-syllable ceremony began to speak.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH LADY BEAUTY, HER LOVER, ARCHIBALD GOLDMORE, AND ALL READERS GET
A SURPRISE.

‘We have been examining, my dear Sophia, your mother’s papers, and we are now in a position to let you know exactly how you stand. I have waited before calling you down in order that I might be able to satisfy your mind in all particulars, and not merely read over documents to you which would deal in general terms, without making the facts of the case clear. I think as your mother has made a very special communication to you about the state of her affairs—a communication which she wished her executor to read before showing it to you—I think I may now read her letter, and thus it will be she and not I who will tell you how you are left. Shall I read the letter, or will you read it for yourself?’

‘Read it, please,’ Sophia replied, trembling with excitement.

Goldmore drew the candle closer to himself, adjusted his glasses on his nose, and began :

“My dear Sophia,—I have for a long time felt great anxiety about you and your future, when I shall be taken from you. For Caroline and Sibyl I am not concerned; they are happily married, and will never want either wealth or counsel. With you the case is very different. You must be aware that your course in life has not been such as I approved of. I regretted, and I shall always regret, that you did not marry when you had a favourable opportunity; and you know well that, in acting as you did, you cast aside all my precepts, and, indeed,

disappointed all my hopes. But I am bound to say you never forgot yourself, and your behaviour was as mild and daughterly as possible under the circumstances; and I cannot but tell you that your affection for me at that time touched me deeply, even though I was angry. You gave me the idea of a girl who, though acting from a mistaken principle, was doing it in a high-minded way. And, since then, every day I have had fresh tokens of your love and care.

“You three girls will have at my death a thousand pounds apiece. The whole of my remaining income goes back to the



See p. 570.

family of my first husband. I hoped to have seen you married and settled before I died; but, as this was not to be, I could not think of your being left in so miserable a position. For this reason, while my income was still very large, I resolved, without telling any one, to reduce my expenditure, and lay up a little money for you. I have already accumulated rather more than eight thousand pounds, and before I die this sum will no doubt be increased. You will be my residuary legatee, and at my death the sum I have saved will be yours absolutely. I must charge you to be cautious with it. Submit yourself implicitly to the guidance of our good Archibald; and, as you love my memory, and

remember the sacrifice I have made, you must not, in any freak of affection, let the fortune slip away. It is meant for your comfort. You will ill repay me if you allow any other person to squander it.

"You have chosen your way in life; and, although it is not mine, I hope you will be happy. Of course I have no right to force my views on you. You have got to live your own life, and to get enjoyment in your own way. The great thing in life is by some means to get enjoyment out of it, which I sincerely hope you may do. Try, any way, to be a credit to your mother. Remem-



See p. 578.

ber, whatever else you do, always dress handsomely and keep up appearances, and think sometimes of your old worldly mother,

"BARBARA TEMPLE."

Goldmore laid the letter on the table, and then, with his most imposing air, took up another paper, on which were some columns of figures, set out with great care. He readjusted his glasses, and began afresh:

'The property you receive in this way,' he said, 'amounts to about twelve thousand pounds, and the manner in which it is invested is most satisfactory. I should like you to glance over this—'

'O Archibald, not just yet,' Sophia said, in great agitation. 'To-morrow—another time will do. I feel a little upset. Will you give me mamma's letter, and then excuse me for a while? I don't think I can speak very much just now.'

With an agitated bow to the man of law, she got out of the room.

'Miss Temple is a little moved,' the solicitor remarked. 'By no means unnatural.'

'She is a tender-hearted girl,' Goldmore said; adding in his testimonial style, 'I have a high opinion of her.'

And Sophia hurried away, not to her lover, but to her mother's room. There she cast herself on Mrs. Temple's bed, and poured out mingled tears of gratitude, grief, and joy, such as I hope, reader, may bedew your memory some day. The little worldly mother, who seemed—and who, in a way, was—so selfish, how kindly she had acted at the last! Sophia thought of her frivolity, her obstinate refusal to make any preparation for death, her absorbed spirit of worldliness; and then this kind deed coming up like a flower out of her very grave! She was a tender-hearted girl, as Goldmore said; but, perhaps, most of us, one time or another, have felt something akin to the feeling which filled her breast, as, through her tears, she called out, although there was none to hear,

'Mamma, mamma! O, if I could only tell you—if I could only have you for ten minutes to tell you!'

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH LADY BEAUTY'S JOY TURNS INTO PERFECT FROLIC.

Yes, but tears like those—albeit their grief is deep and pure—are ready to sparkle when the next gleam of sunshine comes. Sophia awoke next morning with a dancing heart. She did not see Percival again that night; but sent him a little note asking him to come early to her the following morning. And no sooner was he in the room than she flew to him and kissed him, with pride and delight in every feature.

'What are you going to do?' she asked.

'Going back to Australia, as I told you,' he answered. 'But, Sophia, you are too good—far too good—to offer to wait for me. I am not going to be a success in life, I am afraid.'

'O, I am going to earn my bread myself,' Sophia cried, clapping her hands. 'You keep yourself; I'll keep myself.'

'Earn your bread!' exclaimed Percival. 'How do you mean to do it?'

'Give dancing lessons, dear,' she answered. 'Look here!'

And with a 'tra, la, la' on her lips, she began to turn and

whirl about the room, down and up, the picture of honest delight. And Percival looked on in wonder, which at every motion of her figure kept turning into love.

'Dancing lessons!' he exclaimed. 'Where will you get pupils?'

'Here is my first,' she retorts, taking him up as she goes by. 'Now, sir—'

'Really, Sophia, what is all this for?'

'For twelve thousand pounds, you clumsy boy! There, you are on my toe!'

'Twelve thousand pounds, Sophia!'

'Twelve thousand pounds, Mr. Percival Brent. I am worth twelve thousand pounds!' Now she stops and looks him full in the face. 'By the way, can you tell me how Mrs. Lanigan is?'

Percival turned very red at this amazing question; but there was no guiltiness in his face as he replied:

'How do you know Mrs. Lanigan?'

'How do *you* know her?' Sophia asked smartly. 'I know her through the newspaper. She was out driving with a friend of mine and got spilt. Somebody said it was the horses having had too much champagne—the newspaper said that.'

Percival muttered something under his breath, which sounded very like some brief and emphatic remark about the newspaper, and caused Sophia to lift her finger.

'Please, not before me,' she said. 'No colonial language before me. I am not Bessie Warren.'

'I thought there was something up by what I heard in the hotel last night,' Percival said, with gravity and reflection. 'Tell me, Sophia, have there been any stories going about here not to my credit?'

'Rather,' she answered, now serious herself. 'Don't mind them.'

'Let me tell you the whole truth about that affair,' he said. 'I was driving with Mrs. Lanigan. The fact was I was one of a large party in the country that day, and the carriage which was to take Mrs. Lanigan back to the theatre had an accident, and the friend at whose house she was asked me to drive her in his gig, and I did, and we came to grief. I believe, Sophia, I *had* too much champagne, and that is the truth of it. We had rather too merry an afternoon meal. I drank too much wine, I confess.'

'Naughty boy! But tell me—did you sit next to Mrs. Lanigan at lunch?'

'No; at the far end of the table.'

'There,' Sophia said twice over, putting a kiss between the two words—'there, I forgive you the champagne!'

She forgave him; but the hot fellow would not so easily for-

give the slanderous folk who had made free with his name. And if I were to tell how he searched the slander out, and faced Mrs. Hands, and faced John Done, to whom she referred him, and how John Done turned very pale, and declared that Mrs. Hands had taken up in earnest what he had said in jest, and how to exculpate himself John Done made all his family quarrel for ever with Mrs. Hands, and how Mrs. Hands by the transaction lost fifty dinners and about one hundred lunches annually for the remainder of her life—all this, if I were to tell, would fill more pages than I can compute in a moment, and time and space press, and I must and shall soon make an end. So we go back to Sophia and her Percival.

He will not consent to marry her as a poor man. He will go back to Australia and make his fortune. Note, reader, how she manages him.

‘O, very well,’ cries she, tossing her head angrily. ‘Of course I can’t say, “*Will you marry me?*” three times running. You must do as you please.’

She walks from him to the window, and looks out, quite in a pet.

‘You know what I mean,’ explains he. He has followed her. ‘You know quite well what I mean.’

‘Well, if I do, then you need say no more about it.’

And she turns her back on him.

‘I only say I can’t marry you as a poor man.’

‘Very well; don’t marry me, then.’

‘But I don’t want you to speak in that way.’

‘And I don’t want to speak at all.’

‘Sophia, you need not be so ill-natured.’

She turns round on him, making ready to tell fib the second, which this time was a sizable one without any mistake.

‘O, I know what it is: you have some other woman out in Australia whom you want to marry, and this is all pretence.’

‘Want to marry some other woman out in Australia!’ Percival cried, aghast at the thought. ‘Another woman! Why, Sophia, look here!’

He sinks at her feet, and then he presses her handkerchief to his lips—not her hand—humbly signifying that anything about her is dear to him. And she, though not ill-pleased to see how artistically she has brought him to her feet, bites her lip, tosses her head, looks angry still. Then releasing her handkerchief from his grasp, and putting it to her eyes—

‘I know this,’ she says. ‘If you really lo-lo-loved me, you would not let this miserable mo-mo-money stand in our way!’

And quite overcome with grief, she plunges into her pocket-handkerchief, and is lost to his view.

He will have her out ; she will not come. He will dry her eyes ; she does not want to have them dried. He will make her stop crying ; she cries all the more. At last he sinks at her feet.

'Listen, Sophy ; I will do anything you please. I will make no trouble about anything. I will marry or not, just as you like, if you only will stop crying. I can't bear to see you cry ; I can't, indeed.'

'O, you dear old stupid !' she cries, unveiling herself at the moment ; and there she is, rosy, blushing, laughing, triumphant. She has carried her point and made a fool of him, and she tosses her handkerchief in his face, and flies from the room, killing him with a retreating eye as he tries to catch her in vain.

My wish is that every reader of this delightful tale should, at all convenient places, have the moral lessons of the passage pointed out. Here I will just remark that if any reader is very much in love with a woman, and she wants him to do anything which he does not want to do, he may as well do it at once and save time.

One other fragment of their courtship, of later date, let me give, just to show how Sophia wove her web around him. She is at the piano, and has been singing 'In questa Tomba' to him. They are alone in the little drawing-room, and Percival says,

'I am so fond of that melancholy music.'

'Melancholy music ! Will you have some more ?'

'Please.'

Ripple and dash, her hands fly across the keys. Ripple and dash, the notes glance off her finger-tips in a kind of audible spray. Then, with one look behind her at him, and a face full of fun, she starts off :

'We Two.

LAUGH ! if your heart beat light, dear boy ;
Alone and merry are we ;
For Love is the game, and I am the toy :
So laugh, if you like, at—*me !*

SING ! if your heart beat light, dear boy—
Like a lark o'er a sunlit lea ;
Let the first trill be Passion, the next be Joy,
And the end of the music—*me !*

DANCE ! if your heart beat light, dear boy ;
There's nobody here to see.
You can be saucy—and I can be coy !
Dance, with your arms about—*me !*

Just for one hour of heedless joy
This shall our pastime be—
Laughter and singing and dancing, dear boy ;
And only yourself and—*me !*

She ceased, and turned up a thorough flirting face, sparkling like a brook when the sunshine glances on it through moving

leaves. O, she was ready for a bit of frolic just then, our grave Sophia, with her seriousness and her natural piety, and all the rest. Grave young women frolic at times, my uninstructed reader, and I would have you know it.

But Percival, more prosaic than she—perhaps more in love just then—looked at her, and his eyes grew moist with tenderness and delight as he gazed.

‘I don’t laugh much, Sophy. I dance badly. I can’t sing at all.’

‘An old crabbed awkward thing!’ she replied. ‘His face is crosspatch. His step is a halt. His notes were learned in a rookery.’

No, do what she will, she cannot make him laugh. He is too much in love, and his gaze makes her more serious too. The twinkling lights in her face pass off. She begins to give him beam for beam, full of earnest affection. Ah, the brook is running deeper now, and the light falls on it steadily.

‘But the awkward boy loves little Sophia more than all the world beside.’

‘Does he? truly?’

‘More than all the world beside.’ How old the words are! How new and fresh each lover can make them!

‘And will he go on loving—for ever and for ever and for ever?’

‘For ever and for ever and for ever.’

‘Then,’ Sophia cried, spreading out her arms, ‘why are you standing over there, stupid thing? Don’t keep me waiting any longer. Come and kiss me.’

CHAPTER VIII.

LADY RIVALS, WITH THE FOOTLIGHTS BETWEEN THEM.

PERCIVAL got his own way, after all, in the matter of marrying as a poor man. Fortune, Henry Fielding tells us somewhere, never does things by halves. Two months after, Percival’s uncle died, and it was found that, in spite of his wife’s cajoling, he had remembered his nephew; and though the bulk of his property went to his stepsons, he left Percival the fifteen hundred a year which he had so long allowed to his father. So Percival did not marry as a poor man after all, and the little mother, had she lived, might have confessed that sometimes love finds out the way to fortune too.

Wedding-bells come ringing in as my story nears its end. Sophia Temple is the bride the sun shines on. It is a quiet marriage; but loving eyes are about her and upon her. Seven long years she has waited, and now the day has dawned that makes

her happy. All is sunshine. The little wedding-feast is full of plesantry. Egerton Doolittle makes a speech, in which he assures the company that he always maintained, in the face of everybody, that Sophia would find some one to marry her some day. He did not exactly mean what he said, but that some one would turn up; for he had heard that there never is a Jack but there is a Jill—not that he meant to imply that Sophia was not most charming, quite the reverse; but still it requires foresight to say how any given thing will turn out, and he always said so in spite of everybody, and there the thing was that day, and nobody could gainsay it. And Goldmore hands Sophia solemnly into her carriage, and off they go for life and love, and the story is told.

They come back again and settle in the Beeches, which has lain vacant since Mrs. Temple gave it up. They begin their married life with every promise of happiness, and with the brief sunshine of this life warm and bright about them. May I relate one little incident?

Exactly a month after their return home, Egerton Doolittle came in one morning and asked to see Sophia privately; and when he was alone with her and the door shut, he drew a long playbill out of his pocket.

'Look here, Sophia,' he says, in a voice of alarm, 'look at this.'

The bill announces that in a neighbouring city there is to be for one night only a performance of the *School for Scandal*, with Mr. Lanigan as Charles Surface, and Mrs. Lanigan as Lady Teazle.

'I call it a serious thing for you, Sophia,' Egerton says. 'If you will take my advice as a relative, I should keep Percival in the background. You will observe it is only for one night, and as a prudential matter I should keep Percival in the background.'

Does she?

'Come here, sir,' she says to her husband after Egerton has gone. 'Do you see this?'

She shows him the playbill, and he looks a little foolish and conscious.

'I want to see the Lanigan, Percy,' she says. 'You must take a box for us both to see the Lanigan.'

'You are jesting, Sophia!'

'Never was more serious in my life. I must, and I will, see Mrs. Lanigan!'

So the abashed husband has to take a box, and in due time they are waiting for the curtain to rise.

'Now which is Mrs. Lanigan?' Sophia asks after the play has begun.

'There,' Percival says, 'in the satin dress.'

'The blue-satin dress? Surely THAT is not Mrs. Lanigan?' Sophia puts a very impressive emphasis on 'that.'

'Yes, that is she,' Percival replies, with obvious awkwardness. He feels very much ashamed of having admired her. He can see nothing in her now at all.

'Mrs. Lanigan is not the woman with the long train?' Sophia says, resolved to disbelieve him. In fact, she implies that it is quite incredible that THAT can be Mrs. Lanigan.



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'Yes, the woman with the long train,' he replies.

'Why, Percival, you said she was so pretty.'

'Well, you know,' Percival says, 'that was in Australia.'

'Had she the same nose in Australia?' inquires Sophia, crushing her husband by this sarcasm.

And hereupon Mrs. Sophia Brent sets to work and picks the renowned Lanigan to pieces from her eyebrows to her toes, and makes it as plain as Euclid to Percival that she is not at all prepossessing; and Percival, having the woman of women at his side, believes all he hears, and begins to remember now that

Mrs. Lanigan's complexion was sometimes a little doubtful. So you see, reader, that Sophia, with all her charms, was only mortal woman after all, and would let fly an arrow at a rival as swiftly as any of her sex. But it mattered nothing to Mrs. Lanigan, who was three times recalled. And it mattered nothing to Sophia, who only wanted to punish her husband, and never loved him more tenderly than that night. And so it really comes to this, that I need not have recorded so trivial an occurrence at all.

Sequel.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH, AS THE CHARACTERS BEGIN TO DISAPPEAR, THE MORAL OF THE PIECE
BREAKS ON OUR VIEW.

I AM beginning to regret that I did not call this 'A Circular Novel;' which, beside being a title that might have raised public curiosity immensely, would have pointed to one of the most remarkable features of the production. For the mathematical reader will know that it is the property of a circle—no matter how vast it be—that if you pursue its circumference patiently, you must at last reach the very point from which you start. So here, reader, have you and I been companions now for six months, and on the best of terms, trudging without a murmur the round of this novel, and now June finds us in that very dining-room, with its mingling lights, from which at first we started. For the dining-room was Egerton Doolittle's; and among the company were not Sophia only, but her husband, Percival Brent. And now let us ascend to the drawing-room and rejoin the ladies, and with the evening our novel too shall close.

One ponderous figure we miss. Archibald Goldmore no longer moves in the Kettlewell society. Fifteen long years ago that leviathan paid the great debt of nature. The grand reserve which had hung around him all his life long was never, even to the last, ruffled by one fold. Responsible he was, just, good in his own way; but Sibyl never got very near to him. The pair had not a quarrel in their lives; partly because she stood in awe of him, partly because he never meddled with her, partly because each was impassive and cold, partly because they never loved each other. Love, my reader, is a grand ingredient in quarrels. The husband and wife walked apart through life, and never exchanged one cordial confidence. Even when Goldmore was seized with what he felt inly sure was to be his mortal illness, he did not communicate his foreboding to Sibyl. This was not because he feared frightening her, but only from his way of keeping things to himself. Before long, however, concealment

became impossible. The doctor entered the house ; the end was in view.

‘ Sibyl,’ the old man said one day, when he was rather better than usual, ‘ I wish to say a word to you.’ He drew himself up a little, with a faint remembrance in his air of his famous testimonial style. ‘ You have been to me a loving and an honourable wife. When I die you will find that I have recognised all that. You will not be hampered by any foolish restrictions. I desire to return you my thanks ’—as if he had been speaking at a public dinner—‘ for your unvarying consideration and attention to all my wishes.’

He paused, and she stood beside him and did not speak, nor show any sign of feeling. She only regarded him fixedly ; and he, after waiting to gather a little strength, added in the simplest way,

‘ God bless you, my dear, and watch over you when I am gone !’

And then, although her face moved not a whit, he saw one tear come out and stand on her eyelash and roll down her cheek. It was the only tear he had ever seen her shed. Perhaps from her it signified more than floods of weeping from an ordinary woman. It was sincere, anyhow, not assumed ; and Goldmore knew it, and the sight comforted him before he died.

Liberty and fortune he certainly left her ; and at the time of his death Sibyl was in the very height of matronly beauty. Her figure was full and rounded, her hair as fresh as when she was twenty, and her movements full of grace and dignity. She was by no means young ; but hers was a style of beauty which Time finds it hard to destroy, and we all expected that she would have married again. This expectation was the more reasonable, because she maintained her more youthful habits. But five years went by, ten, fifteen, and still Sibyl Goldmore did not change her name. And now there appeared upon her most unmistakable signs of age ; and, curiously enough, as her beauty more and more decayed, she seemed more and more resolved to let all the world know what a beauty she thought herself. She grew affected, sat in postures, dressed for twenty-five—we even fancy that she rouged a little.

Meanwhile her old reserve and her silent ways remained the same. She talked little, and took no pains with her conversation. She treated most people with haughty reserve. Strong and sensible as she was, Sibyl was never able to see that she was growing an old woman, and that the affectation of physical beauty had long ago been ridiculous. I grieve to write it of Sibyl, for whom I have ever felt respect and even regard ; but the verdict of Kettlewell was that she—once a queen in our society—had become—dreadful word !—*a bore* !

Caroline, at the same time, had changed with years in quite another way. You remember how well she used to dress?—all these girls dressed well. But Caroline, as she became intellectual, began to neglect her person, and rather affected slovenliness. She would wear a morning dress in the evening, or go to a concert in a shawl like a parish blanket, which she would pin across her breast with some odd brooch that she might have picked up in Hanway-street. In fact, Car became fearfully blue, and would even talk about Hebrew during dinner, attacking tender young curates who had never seen a Hebrew grammar, frightening the poor young men out of their senses, and ruining a good dinner. In addition to this, she became a woman's rights lady, and made speeches advocating female suffrage. Upon these occasions, Egerton used to go to the back of the hall with an umbrella and applaud. Also, if it was a strange town, he would nudge his next neighbour when the speakers came on the platform :

'Can you tell me,' he would ask, in a low whisper, 'which of these ladies is Mrs. Egerton Doolittle?'

Curiously enough, the stranger was never able to point her out.

'I should like to have seen her,' Egerton would say. 'People assert she is a tremendously clever woman. Indeed, I know she is. In fact, you may spread it with confidence: she is a tremendously clever woman!'

'And in this way, my dear,' Egerton would say to her when they got home, 'in this way I intend to get your name up. It's the kind of thing that is done with actresses, and—and popular preachers, and statesmen too, I understand. Some one goes about—perhaps the man's twin-brother—pretending he does not know him by sight: asks, "Is that the great Mr. So-and-so?" Probably the other says, "I never heard of the great Mr. So-and-so." "How very remarkable!" the twin-brother exclaims. "Everybody is talking about him. I so wish to see what he is like." Exactly my way with you, dear. I shall get your name up, depend upon it.'

'I am afraid we shall never get our votes,' Caroline remarked, resting her chin on her hand, and speaking in a mood of doleful confidence. It had been a wet evening, and the meeting had been small, moist, and not sanguine. 'We are working against hope.'

'I should not be disheartened, Car, if I were you,' Egerton replied. 'Try a little of this pheasant, dear. No? Well, I will. I was going to say, I should not be disheartened about the cause. As you said to-night, dear, new truths always have to work their way. Look at my theory about red mullet. I

have been at it for twenty years, and yet even to this day that delicious fish is laid on your plate in most houses in Kettlewell just as if it was a package. But that truth will work its way too; and when I am no more'—Egerton said this with a tremor in his voice, and he laid down his knife and fork to deal with certain symptoms of moisture in his left eye—'when I am no more, red mullet will be cooked in my way all over educated Europe.'

For poor Egerton remained constant to his great theory about red mullet, and firmly persuaded that a reform in that direction would help on the regeneration of mankind, and in this gentle conviction our amiable milksop will live and die.

We bid farewell to Sibyl, to Caroline, to Egerton. Let the men learn what lesson from Egerton they can or will. I write for the women. And I wish them to observe that Caroline as well as Sibyl sank into a social infliction, lost all power of attraction as years went on; and in both cases I believe the loss arose from simple mismanagement. This story (as every reflecting reader saw long ago) has as many morals as a hedgehog has prickles. But here is one particular moral spear which I would infix in the minds of my feminine students:

Either Sibyl or Caroline, according to the gifts of person and of mind, would have outshone Sophia from first to last, had they known the secret of charming as she knew it.

CHAPTER II.

PICTURE OF A VIRTUOUS HUSBAND, WHOSE WIFE WAS SO DELIGHTFUL THAT HE COULD NOT HELP HIMSELF.

I DARESAY some of those readers who are never satisfied want to know why in the world I have not told them more about Percival Brent, our Sophia's worthy and happy husband. Now the answer to this I shall at once supply. He was so good and worthy, and so successful and happy after his marriage, that of him there is nothing to tell. What can you say in a story about a man who goes to bed and gets up again three hundred and sixty-five times every year like all the rest of us? It is your men who either never wish to go to bed, or have no bed to go to, who make the fortunes of us novelists. Percival continued a devoted student of science all his life, and he has already attained a very respectable eminence among men of research. I have been told that, but for his great modesty, his name would be more widely known than it is; and even now I am assured he will make a sensation beyond his own circle of thought by a new work which he has in hand. Sophia loved him well and constantly, and he never wavered in his devotion to her for an instant.

His only other mistress was Science, who is a harmless dame, and never broke a wife's heart yet; for, indeed, she rather promotes matrimonial constancy. Children came to these happy two in fair succession, girls and boys—the eldest being at Cambridge when the youngest was yet toddling from chair to chair. I fancy Sophia never quite shared the enthusiasm of her lord and master for the physical sciences; and she did not quite care for all his learned professors, who had not enough humanity for her; but she always entertained them genially. At times she would fillip her husband a little. For instance, one day hearing him say of a scientific friend, 'He is successful and profound,' which Percival uttered with unusual deliberation, Mrs. Sophia comes to her husband's side, and, looking saucily over his shoulder, says she,

'By "successful" my husband means that the gentleman has discovered a new beetle, and by "profound" that he believes absolutely nothing.'

Which Percival answered with a laugh and a pinch. Beyond these harmless pleasantries there was never a difference on general subjects between the two.

And here is why I have said nothing about Percival Brent. Happy, somebody cries, is the nation that has no history. Happy the husband, say I, about whom the novelist can find nothing to tell. Happy Percival Brent, of whom all we now record is that he called Sophia his wife; and that she was mother to the children who are now rising up like young palm-trees in that happy home where once down the dining-room floor our merry little mother of long ago stepped her minuet.

But Sophia, Sophia, to you I have not done justice. We all called you 'Lady Beauty,' but I have failed to describe you aright. You are not interesting in my pages. You are interesting in life. Who could make real your thousand little graces of mind and way, of dress and look and speech? I feel that had I drawn a woman who knew the way to administer strychnine safely, and did administer it; or had I written about a woman who had four husbands, but had never realised her Ideal, and described her in a cab, or a yacht, or some other energetic conveyance, flying away to joy with the man of her heart; or had I described a lively young woman who smoked Three Castles tobacco, wore a billycock hat sloped on her head, knew how to swear and whistle,—she might have been a success in my hands. But you I have not been able to draw, my sweet Sophia. A blurred dim tracing is all I have given of your clear and perfect beauty. You will be called insipid; you whose hands and eyes and presence, had they but been about me, would have made me all I might have been, and now shall never be. Forgive me, who,

trying to paint you, have painted only your pale shadow, and who feels now, as the brush slips through tired fingers, 'I have tried and tried, and failed.'

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH LADY BEAUTY TEACHES LADIES ALL HOW TO BE BEAUTIFUL FOR EVER WITHOUT ENAMELLING.

BUT with a sigh I shall not end this story. I am resolved to end smiling, and to have my readers smiling too; for which purpose I have kept an anecdote for the very latest line.

Sophia would sometimes see her friends at little *tête-à-tête* visits, and here she would discourse, as she only could, on all kinds of subjects, or she would let her friends discourse. The charm of Sophia was, that you could never tell exactly whether it was you or she kept up the conversation. How that woman managed her house and family is quite beyond my comprehension. Manage she did, and well; and yet whenever you called on her, morning or evening, there she was, dressed with the best taste, her hair done in faultless style, and all the rest of her attire to match. Ah, gray-haired Sophia, you knew—did you not?—that one to whom you often vouchsafed those gracious interviews, in all honour loved you with a more than boyish love? Of what did we not talk! Literature, music, pictures, history, gossip now and then; but somehow one always went away from that drawing-room with a more cheerful heart, with nobler views and hopes of human life, with a touch of refinement caught from Sophia. And lovers Sophia had more than me, as he shall see who reads on to the now-nearing close.

One morning—well I remember it—as Sophia and myself sat thus alone, Percival being occupied with a fossil, I drew from my pocket that little paper of 'Beauty Rules,' of which I told you some time ago, saying that I should like her to explain these axioms to me. She was sitting in a low chair, and had a work-basket beside her, with which she kept up a kind of telegraphic connection in the shape of a thread which travelled slowly from the basket to herself, as her fingers worked out some mystery in wool.

'Hand me the paper,' she said, laying her needles and work down. 'I will read them to you, and explain.'

But here Sophia was seized with a fit of laughing, greatly tickled, it seemed, to find herself lecturing on beauty to me.

'I never showed these to any one except yourself,' she remarked, when her mirth was ended. 'And I never meant to show them to any one at all. I daresay you will think them great rubbish.'

And so she began with a comic preface, which was not on the paper at all :

“Beauty Rules,” by Sophia Brent, an elderly lady, who ought to be thinking of other things.’

‘RULE ONE.—*A woman’s power in the world is measured by her power to please. Whatever she may wish to accomplish she will best manage it by pleasing. A woman’s grand social aim should be to please.*

‘And let me tell you how that is to be done,’ Sophia said, putting her paper down for a moment. ‘A woman can please the eye by her appearance, her dress, her face, and her figure. She can please the ear by studying the art of graceful elocution, not hard to any of us, for by nature we speak with finer articulation than you. She can please the mind by cultivating her own—so far, at least, as to make her a good listener; and as much farther as she will she can please the fancy by ladies’ wit, of which all of us have a share. She can please the heart by amiability. See here,’ she continued, growing graver, ‘you have the key of my system. Beauty of person is only one feature of true beauty. Run over these qualities. See how small a part personal beauty or the freshness of youth plays here. I want you to observe this; for my art would consist not in making women attractive who are openly pretty and young, but in showing them that youth and prettiness, though articles of beauty, are neither the only nor the indispensable articles.’

‘In that case,’ I remarked, ‘you will hardly illustrate your system in person.’

To this she vouchsafed a smile and mock curtsy, and read,

‘RULE TWO.—*Modesty is the ground on which all a woman’s charms appear to the best advantage. In manners, dress, conversation, remember always that modesty must never be forgotten.*’

‘Hardly likely to be,’ I murmured. ‘Is it?’

‘Understand me,’ answered Sophia briskly. ‘I mean modesty in a very extended sense. There is nowadays a tendency in women to rebel against old-fashioned modesty. The doctrine of Liberty is spreading among us, for which I thank God,’ Sophia said (she was the oddest little mixture of Tory and Whig and Radical ever compounded on this eccentric earth). ‘But the first effects of that doctrine on our minds are a little confusing. We are growing more independent and more individual. Some of us fancy that to be modest is to be old-fashioned, and of course we want the newest fashions in all things. I maintain,’ Sophia said, growing a little warm, as if she fancied I might argue back—‘I maintain that a modest woman is the reply of my sex to a brave man—you can no more have a true woman without modesty than a true

man without courage. But remember, I use the word modesty in a high sense.'

'Just what I was going to ask,' I said.

'Not prudery,' she added. 'Prudery is to modesty what brag is to bravery. Prudery is on the surface; modesty is in the soul. Rosalind in her boy's suit is delightfully modest, but not,' Sophia said, with a twinkle of her eye—'not very prudish, is she?'

I assented, and thus made way for—

'RULE THREE.—*So the woman's aim is to please, and modesty is the first principle in the art of pleasing.*

'Have you anything to say to that?' she demanded.

'Not a syllable,' I replied. 'I play disciple this morning.'

'Very well,' she rejoined. 'We come, then, to—'

'RULE FOUR.—*Always dress up to your age or a little beyond it. Let your person be the youngest thing about you, not the oldest.*

'A very important lesson for women of forty,' Sophia remarked, speaking with a seriousness which amused me. 'The attempt to dress for young almost invariably leads to a reaction in the spectator's mind, and the traces of years become more palpable and more significant. But a slight and graceful assumption of years in one's dress has an effect directly opposite. May this rule pass?'

I bowed, and she went on:

'RULE FIVE.—*Remember that what women admire in themselves is seldom what men admire in them.*

'In nine drawing-rooms out of ten,' Sophia said, seeing me give a look of inquiry as she read this article, 'Miranda or Cordelia, as novel heroines, would be voted bores. Women would say, "We utterly decline to accept these watery girls as typical of us; we want smartness and life." I don't really care much for Miranda or Cordelia myself. Now this seems to me to caution us against trusting too implicitly or too far our own notions about ourselves. Another source of misunderstanding comes from the novel-writers. We are the novel-readers, and the novelist is forced to write heroines to suit our taste. He does not want to offend us. Thus it comes about that even the male novelist is too often only depicting women's women, after all. And I believe scores of modern girls are seriously misled for this very reason. They believe they are finding out what men think of them, when in truth they are reading their own notions handed back to them under a pretty disguise.'

'Like the cheap wine,' I ventured to observe, 'made in England, exported to a foreign country to be blessed, and then returned as fine old sherry—highly-finished wine.'

Sophia laughed with me at this, and read on:

'RULE SIX.—*Women's beauties are seldom men's beauties.*

'Which,' she remarked, 'is another form of what I said just now, only here I speak of personal beauty. My observation is, that if ten men and ten women were to go into the same company, and each sex choose the prettiest woman there, as they thought, you would rarely find that they chose the same. If this be so, we ought not to trust ourselves even as to our faces without considering that the sex we are to please must in the end settle the question, and will settle the question in its own way.

'RULE SEVEN.—*Gaiety tempered by seriousness is the happiest manner in society.*

'By which I mean,' Sophia said, looking at me with knitted brows, as if she were about to explain some matter not altogether clear to herself, 'that in all our gaiety there ought to be a hint of self-recollection. Do you understand me?'

'Not quite,' I said.

'This I know certainly,' she replied: 'the most agreeable women I have met with—and I think the most regarded—have been women of rank, who have been trained with a due regard for religion. Their worldly education had made them mindful of grace and liveliness: their religious education kept these qualities under a particular sort of control, which is perceptibly different from mere good breeding. It seems to me that vivacity and sprightliness are greatly enhanced by a vein of seriousness. Certainly no woman ought to be a mocker.

'Next,' she continued, seeing I did not speak, 'comes—

'RULE EIGHT.—*Always speak low.*

'I wonder why I put that down. It is so obvious. In support of it I need only quote your Shakespeare, who calls it "an excellent thing in woman."

'RULE NINE.—*A plain woman can never be pretty. She can always be fascinating if she takes pains.*

'I well remember,' Sophia said, after reading this, to me, rather questionable assertion, 'a man who was a great admirer of our sex telling me that one of the most fascinating women he had ever known was not only not pretty, but as to her face decidedly plain—ugly, only the word is rude. I asked my friend, "How, then, did she fascinate?" I well remember his reply. "Her figure," said he, "was neat, her dressing was faultless, her every movement was graceful, her conversation was clever and animated, and she always tried to please. It was not I alone who called her fascinating; she was one of the most acceptable women in society I ever knew. She married brilliantly, and her husband, a barrister in large practice, was devoted to her—more than if she had been a queen of beauties."

'Now here,' Sophia continued, resuming her own discourse

—‘here was a woman who, excepting a fairly neat figure, had not a single natural gift of appearance. Is not this worth our thinking about—those of us women who care to please and are not beauties born?’

‘**RULE TEN.**—*Every year a woman lives the more pains she should take with her dress.*

‘The dress of us elderly dames,’ Sophia said, laughing, ‘ought to be more of a science than it is. How often one hears a woman of fifty say, “O, my dressing days are past!” When,’ adds Sophia, ‘if she thought about it, they have only well begun. At least, the time has come when dress is more to her than ever. Remember, from forty to sixty-five is a quarter of a century—the third of a long life. It is a period through which the majority of grown-up people pass. And yet how little pains women take—how little thought beforehand—to be charming then!’

‘And now,’ she went on, seeing I did not speak, ‘here comes my last rule—as yet:

‘**RULE ELEVEN.**—*In all things let a woman ask what will please the men of sense before she asks what will please the men of fashion.*

‘I by no means intend,’ she added, ‘that a woman is not to have regard to the opinion of men of fashion, only she should not give it the first place. She will carry the men of fashion sooner by methods that please the men of sense than men of sense by methods that please men of fashion. And besides, listen to the men of fashion. They always praise a woman for things which begin to perish at twenty-five. Even the old men of seventy will talk of “a fine girl—deucedly fine figure!”’ (I wish I could give an idea of Sophia’s slightly wicked mimicry at this passage.) ‘And they will call a woman rather on the decline, when, if she is on the decline, where and what are they? You see if a woman lives for the commendation of men of fashion she will, if pretty, piquant, or what not, have a reign of ten years. But if she remembers that she has charms of mind and character and taste, as well as charms of figure and complexion, the men of sense will follow her for half a century; and in the long-run the men of fashion will be led by the men of sense.

‘And there,’ Sophia cried merrily, throwing the paper down on the rug beside her—‘there are my rules for reforming our little world of women!’

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST AND LEAST CHAPTER OF THE NOVEL.

I PRAISE my heroine no more—not a line, not a word. Two little anecdotes I tell of her, and with these I leave her to your

judgment, my fair readers. The first anecdote, you will perceive, is in the old style, and you will yawn over it. The second is more in our modern habit.

Percival Brent was a quiet undemonstrative man of science, who never shocked anybody by declaring himself against religion, or the 'old notions.' But among his particular friends, it was well known that he freely accepted the most advanced and (as they are at present considered) the most disintegrating scientific views. ('Now what is this leading up to?' you, my May-blossom student, will ask: patience, little one; look below and see how near the end we are.) One of his friends who knew his views, and could speak to him freely, said one day interrogatively,

'It is a matter of astonishment to me, Brent, that you, with your opinions, still keep up your religious practices so regularly?'

'Let me tell you the reason,' Brent answered. 'I am married to a wife whom I love, and admire even more than I love her. For true sweetness of character, liveliness, sense, and virtue all round, I never met her equal. I have often asked myself, "What is the secret of her character?" and I always come to the same conclusion—that if her religious faith were deducted from her she could not be what she is, but must become a less agreeable and not so good a woman. She has kept me from taking the leap which reason has often bid me take. I cannot renounce a religion which I feel makes her what she is.'

A tedious anecdote, reader, however short. Now for number two, which is quite another pattern.

To Kettlewell, not so many years ago, came a man aged forty-three. He was famed as a ladies' man, and something in him must have pleased women, for his success with a certain set was quite undoubted. Perhaps his consummate impudence won their hearts. Be that as it may, he was among them an object of no little curiosity, the more because he was wealthy and presumptive heir to a title. This man, satisfied with himself, and confident of his power over women, met Mrs. Sophia Brent two or three times. Whether he fancied her to be maid or widow—or whether, knowing her to be married, he meant to enshrine her in a Platonic affection, I cannot tell. This I can tell. This, reader, did actually happen:

That this man of the world, aged forty-three, fell in love with Mrs. Sophia Brent, aged fifty-three, and positively made a downright fool of himself.

Ladies, I am your most obedient humble servant.

UNDER THE LIMES.

In the last sweet hours of sunny June,
When summer was ringing her matin chime,
I stood in the shade in a sultry noon—
In the shade of the sweetly-scented lime.
In the cloisters of the boughs above
The bees were singing their anthem low ;
And the sough of the wind was soft with love
As it blew on my heart—when I heard it blow.

And a voice that was sweeter than wind or bee
Spoke there with such solemn earnestness,
That the face grew pale as it turned to me :
' No sorrow shall make my love grow less,
For I could not live if love were gone,
And I cared for none till I cared for you.'
And the monotone of the bees went on,
While the soughing wind in the branches blew.

Yet before the roses died away
The love was dying, the love was dead ;
And the eyes that burned in my heart that day
Burnt all the flowers of my heart instead.
The lips that framed those changeless vows
Gave careless greetings when we met ;
Yet the wind still sighed in the scented boughs,
And the bees were in the branches yet.

Since, I have wondered many a time
Whether I stood on that day in June
And heard the bees in the fragrant lime,
With the soughing wind—and my heart in tune.
Perhaps 'twas a dream, and the dreamer I—
Dreams must be broken, as all men know ;
Yet whenever I smell the limes I sigh,
And the wind seems to curse when I hear it blow.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.

THE CITY ON THE TRAVE.

It was one of the warmest days of a hot summer when the P. W. Dillberg, a Swedish steamer, left Copenhagen for Lübeck; and pleasant was the sea air when we had got a little off the land. Everything about the P. W. Dillberg was bright and clean. The private cabins were roomy, the deck was broad, the seats comfortable. For the first hour or so all went well. Then the P. W. Dillberg began to rise and fall in ominous fashion. Jokes were plentiful about land-lubbers who could not keep their sea-legs, and we spoke like tough salts: 'Call this a sea!' We felt no fear; every man strode the deck with nautical tread, and metaphorically snapped his fingers at Fate. Alas for pleasant boasting! A crash was heard, and cup and saucer slipped from a deck-table. Then a couple of camp-stools violently rushed down to the other side. There was a stampede of ladies. As we got more and more out into the open, the P. W. Dillberg lost all sense of dignity, sometimes standing on her bowsprit, and sometimes, we feared, meditating a pirouette on her rudder. My friend Frodsham retired to his cabin, and pleasantly occupied himself with Andersen's *Bilderbuch ohne Bilder*, when he was not endeavouring to extricate himself from the occasional avalanche of passengers' luggage which took advantage of his open door.

On deck it was pleasanter, though the sea swept over the ship and darkness crept on. The white cliffs of Möen long shone out, and then we settled in the

blackness of a stormy sea. For four hours I shared the bow with a tall gaunt German school-master, who did not seek the deck for the same reason as I did—which was simply fresh air; he struggled bravely, and, when his health permitted, was as genial a companion as could be desired. He could speak no English, but understood it well. His wife had been in England as a governess, and during the long winter nights they read Shakespeare together at home. Modern English literature, too, he knew. With Tennyson he was familiar. In this literary talk, interrupted over and over again by drenching floods of spray, we struggled on, until at last my companion went away, and I was left alone with the look-out man and the man at the wheel. The night was not a bad one, and I at least slept soundly until we were well up the Trave.

And this at last is Lübeck—once the head of the Hanseatic League, now chiefly a town of the past. Its citizens were distinguished by public spirit, and admirable prudence and courage. The story of its rise and fall is instructive, sometimes even dramatic, from 1143, when it was founded by Count Adolph II. of Holstein on the site of an early Wendish town. Its fall was largely due to the enterprise of Holland and England, and for the last two centuries Lübeck has declined in importance. Two centuries is a long time for a city gently to decay, and there is still much about the old Hanse town which reminds one that the ambition of its citi-

zens was not only to make their commerce great, but to make their Lübeck illustrious in art and architecture. Thus Lübeck preserves in its buildings not only the tradition of a splendid past, but the appearance of a prosperous present.

Among the many quaint cities of Northern Europe Lübeck must take a chief place. Let us sit on the broad terrace of the Staat Hamburg, on the Klingberg, under the shadow of white awnings, and see how the world wags at seven o'clock on an August morning. 'Opposite'—I quote from an account written but three days afterwards in another old town, the famous university one of Göttingen—'a fountain splashes and glitters in the hot morning sunshine, which casts broad shadows of leaves on the tiled floor, on the awning, and on the wall. Already the rough springless country carts are jolting by over the big-stone paved road. Each seems to have its own and peculiar rattle and roar; those that are going to market, with store of baskets full of fragrant greenery, have each a bronze-faced village woman beside the blue-bloused boy who whirls the long whip. A little later, and younger boys begin to pass to school; each a soldier already, wearing over his light linen clothes knapsack in place of satchel or strap. They pour from every cool archway in troops of four and five and six into the sunshine, which the red high-pitched roofs—each one surely the work of a distinct and original architect—seem to make more intense.'

The churches in Lübeck are very well worth visiting, if only for the clocks. Who that has seen the clock, with nose and ever-rolling eyes, in the cathedral, is likely to forget it, or the green-and-white angel which at each

quarter strikes the bell, and the Death, who, clothed in blue and bones, marks the flight of every hour with turning hour-glass? To sit and watch this perplexing superhuman clock is gentle recreation for a summer day; to meditate upon odd themes and be interrupted by unfamiliar presences, dwarfish, childish, mechanical, and yet fascinating. The clock in the Marienkirche dates from 1651, and is more elaborate. Only at twelve o'clock is the great performance; but at that hour little groups gather to watch and wonder, for small doors open, and, to the unending satisfaction of all, the Emperor steps out, followed by the Electors, slides past an image of our Lord, and disappears within another door, to dream again in those venerable shadows where he has spent so much of the last three hundred and twenty years. Each figure, as it passes the Christ, bows, or, to be more exact, violently jerks its head in sign of deference.

Of course it is not alone for such mechanical eccentricities that those churches are noted. They present invaluable illustrations of the history of Gothic architecture. Mr. Ferguson* considers the buildings on the sandy plain of the Baltic as displaying but little artistic merit. 'It is true,' he tells us, 'that in the hands of a refined and art-loving people, like the inhabitants of the North of Italy, brick architecture may be made to possess a considerable amount of beauty. Burnt clay may be moulded into shapes as elegant and as artistic as can be carved in stone, and the various colours, which it is easy to impart to bricks, may be used to form mosaics of the most beautiful patterns; but to carry out all this with success requires a genuine love of art, and an energy

* *Handbook of Architecture*, p. 986.

in the prosecution of it which will not easily be satisfied. Without this the facilities of brick architecture are such that it can be executed by the commonest workmen, and is best done in the least artistic forms. While this is the case, it requires a very strong feeling for art to induce any one to bestow thought where it is not needed, and to interrupt construction to seek for forms of beauty. In brick architecture the best walls are those with the fewest breaks and projections, so that if relief and shadow are to be obtained, they must be added for their own sake; and more than this, walls may be built so thin that they must always appear weak as compared with stone walls, and depth of relief is almost impossible. Another defect is, that a brick building almost inevitably suggests a plaster finishing internally; and every one knows how easy it is to repeat by casting the same ornaments over and over again, and to apply such ornaments anywhere and in any way without the least reference to construction or propriety. All these temptations may of course be avoided. They were so at Grenada by the Saracens, who loved art for its own sake. They were to a considerable extent avoided in the valley of the Po, though by a people far less essentially art-loving than the Moors. But it will easily be supposed that this taste and perception of beauty exerted very little influence in the valley of the Elbe. There the public buildings were raised as cheaply as the necessities of construction would allow, and ornaments were applied only to the extent absolutely requisite to save them from meanness. Thus the churches represent in size the wealth and population of the cities, and were built in the style of Gothic architecture which prevailed at the time of their erection;

but it is in vain to look in them for any of the beauties of the stone Gothic buildings of the same period.'

In the cathedral is a handsome font of 1445; a very valuable altar-piece by Memling, painted in the last years of the fifteenth century; several fine brasses; a St. Christopher of 1665; and a money-box with the inscription:

'Wer sich nach vermögen gibt Gottes haus
Zu Bessern und zu Bauen,
Der wird auch Gottes Bau und Hegen
An seinem House schauen.'

The central aisle of the finer Marienkirche is one hundred and thirty feet high, the side aisles are only half as much. This, as Mr. Ferguson says, allows space for a very splendid clerestory. Among its treasures are two pictures by Overbeck, who was a native of Lübeck; a font of 1337, richer, but somewhat rougher, Lübke considers, than that in the cathedral; a fine altar-piece; and a 'Dance of Death,' long erroneously attributed to Holbein.

Let us come from churches into the light of day, and, taking our stand at one of the windows of the Rathhaus, look down upon the crowd below. It is market-day, and so thickly planted are the stalls that at first we can scarcely see anything but umbrellas of all colours of the rainbow. But as we accustom ourselves to the crowd we pick out at every stall quaint groups. Above her white cap each saleswoman wears a high-peaked Mother Hubbard straw hat, with broad green or blue ribbons. Tied neatly in huge bows under the chin are those ribbons if the wearer is old; if she be young and fair the ribbons stream over the shoulders. Green seems the favourite colour, and 'green indeed is the colour of lovers,' Shakespeare tells us. The purchasers are not themselves wanting in

bright hues. Business is not conducted at a break-neck pace. There is little need for Lübeck man or maid to hurry. Things have not gone fast in business within the recollection of the oldest, and there is time enough for a chat with each old friend, time enough to make much progress with the stocking begun when the cart started for the market; the day is long, the sun is hot, a little money goes far, and life, if hard, is not without its pleasures. News there always is to be picked up, and if you and I would not feel much interested in it, neither would Frau Benedig or Mariechen care much for our æsthetic studies. Under the walls of the venerable building in which we stand many a busier scene has been in the past, and its good fruit is the stolid prosperity of the present calm.

It is now four hundred and thirty-eight years since the oldest part of the Rathhaus was completed; it is exactly three hundred and ninety-eight years since the staircase in the Breit-strasse first delighted the eyes of the citizens. The tidings of the marriage of our Henry VI. with the fifteen-year-old daughter of René of Anjou, titular King of Naples and Count of Provence, were discussed below those walls with the same earnestness that Napoleon's battle evoked; without interruption its venerable ears have drunk in the gossip of four centuries and a half. Shakespeare had only completed his first group of histories when the building was finished; who can tell how much longer it will watch the parti-coloured market-crowds, and hear of empires, leagues, and covenants.

In the wine-cellar beneath is a table said to have been made from a plank of the ship of the last admiral of Lübeck. To one vault brides were brought from the Marienkirche

close at hand, and read the grim warning inscribed on the wall, which, translated, runs: 'Many a man sings loudly when they bring him his bride; if he knew what they brought him he might well weep!'

Among the old churches and guild-houses of Lübeck I will not linger. The church of St. Catherine partly gives house to the school of Lübeck; it is a beautiful early Gothic structure, with the curious peculiarity of a double choir. When we visited it two years ago it was, like most other Lübeck buildings, filled with mechanics and masons. The city library contains curious works and many historical papers.

A strange, half-sleepy, half-busy city, Lübeck is off the main track of tourists, and not much visited save by errant archaeologists and architects. Its prosperity can scarcely return, but it is a convenient stage on the way to or from Copenhagen; and here, by the way, we may remark that many of our tourists might do worse than take a run this summer through beautiful and little-known Denmark. Travelling is cheap, the hotels are excellent, and the novelty of language and customs is pleasant and stimulating. The English are claimed almost as brothers by the close connection of the royal houses of Britain and Denmark, and the story of our frequent warlike attacks upon the capital is remembered only in guide-books. It will, however, be necessary that a traveller should know German, and it will be desirable that he know a little Danish. Without German it is impossible to travel with any comfort in the rural parts of the kingdom; and Denmark only possesses one great city—its capital. In Copenhagen one may hear English on all sides.

Either by Lübeck, direct to Copenhagen, or by Hamburg, and through Schleswig, Fredericia, Odense, and Roeskilde, the art-centre of Northern Europe may be easily reached, and its manifold attractions, from Tivoli to Thorwaldsen's Museum, may well detain the not too hasty traveller for a few days; indeed, speaking very practically, its treasures cannot be seen in a couple of days, for all the exhibitions and galleries are not open on the same day. A very beautiful sail is that from Copenhagen to Helsingör; Helsingör of false poetic fame—for Hamlet's Elsinore was never the Helsingör of Denmark, though Hamlet's grave and Ophelia's brook are ready for the credulous—and of true poetic loveliness. Sweden may be visited with expedition, for its coasts are close at hand. The bathing-places of Denmark are numerous and convenient.

Despite the constant clipping to which the once mighty kingdom has been subjected, it still contains within itself much that is unique and precious, and the courtesy of its graceful women and stately men once experienced will never be forgotten. But Lübeck, full of such memories of the past as a commercial city can awaken, unlike its bustling sister Hamburg, stands dignified and mediæval in the end of the nineteenth century. The Sleeping Beauty of its commerce may not unfitly lie in one of those high-pitched houses, whence she had watched the two great towers of the Marienkirche, the placid Trave and its merchant fleet, the rich flat country all around, in other and better days. But will this Sleeping Beauty awake? or some night when the clock strikes twelve will not rather the whole city melt into fairyland?

SUMMER DAYS IN THE CITY OF YEDO.

WHEN the heat of midsummer renders a residence in the foreign settlement of Yokohama almost intolerable ;—when the eye requires relief from the unbroken glare of white streets and white houses ; when the mind, wearied with many months' bustle and worry in the hard work of bread-winning, yearns for quiet and repose ; when the country, beautiful as it is, demands such exertions for its exploration that pleasure is converted into toil, it is pleasant to take the railway and spend a week in the old 'capital of the Tycoon,' twenty miles away. Here one may wander about at will, unhampered by the exactions of etiquette or business, exploring odd nooks and corners, dreaming away long hours in the shadow of the past. For, although the influences of the present are manifesting themselves more clearly day by day, although romance is slowly but surely being edged out by the march of commonplace and matter-of-fact, there is much left yet in Yedo delightful to the philosopher, the antiquary, and the artist alike.

The glory of the city of Yedo is its temples. Notwithstanding the general substitution of the Shinto religion for the old gorgeous Buddhist ritual, the great fanes still remain ; and an additional charm is lent to the contemplation of them by the fact that they are, for the most part, decaying and deserted, forgotten and overlooked by the people in the midst of whom they raise their gigantic roofs. When the noise and the dust and the smell

of the great thoroughfares render locomotion unpleasant, it is delightful to turn aside for an hour or two into the enclosures of the mighty temples of Shiba. Every visitor to Japan goes to see Shiba ; yet their charm to the oldest resident, to the man who knows every inch of their grass-grown courts and every dark recess and corner under their vast roofs, is never-fading. The explorer is struck mute by the colossal scale upon which the old Japanese temple-builders did their work. Just as the *chefs-d'œuvre* of our grand old cathedral architects dwarf and throw into the shade the work of modern ecclesiastical builders, so do the temples of Shiba at Yedo stand out alone, majestic and unapproached, above everything else around them. There are flimsy houses upon the European model running their roofs close up to the once sacred enclosures, there are huge tea-houses and squat 'go-downs,' or warehouses, cheek by jowl with them ; but in their tree-guarded precincts the temples seem to eye the approach of common, everyday Yedo much as a lion might watch the approach of a mouse. In the great gateway of the Zojoji temple—the ancient burial-place of the Shoguns—the tallest man is but a pigmy ; of the holy-water basin just within, a very fair-sized swimming-bath could be made ; the very lanterns suspended to the cross-beams of the temple are like balloons ; and when the sun shines upon the great slanting roof it gives it the appearance of a vast sheet of gold. Doubtless

the travellers who inflamed the curiosity of Columbus and his companions with tales of the gold-roofed palaces of the Kings of Zipangi, had seen the roof of the Zojoji temple at Shiba. The interior of the temple is suitably dark and mysterious; but when the eye gets accustomed to the gloom, after the blaze of sunshine without, it rests first on the colossal statue of the god, protected from impious or curious hands by a lattice-work of iron, and then wanders amidst the maze of curious carving, colouring, and gilding which adorns the remotest corners of the edifice—for the old temple-builders were as minute and as earnest as they were gigantic, and did not consider that because a spot was scarcely to be seen it should be left bare and unornamented. All round the interior are hung *ex voto*s in the shape of painted strips of wood and wisps of hair. But even more interesting than the temple itself are the quaint nooks and corners surrounding it. Besides the tombs of the old rulers of Japan, are huge stone lanterns, quaintly-carved monsters, and almond-eyed deities dotted about, all weather-stained, moss-grown, and neglected; and behind all is a background of noble trees, which seem ever to be wailing the fallen estate of the monuments before them. The only visitors to the dozen or more temples of Shiba are foreigners and country-folk: the Yedo citizen prefers the simple mirror of Shintoism to the pomp and display of the old faith. The moss grows between the stones of the courtyards; the roofs gape in many places, the colouring and gilding are falling away piecemeal, and innumerable families of pigeons, attracted by the solitude and quiet of the place, have made their homes amidst the quaintly-

carved timber-work of the roofs. Save in one instance, where there is a statue gifted with marvellous curing qualities, to which multitudes of cripples and invalids go for the purpose of rubbing themselves upon it, it is doubtful whether a score of worshippers visit the temples of Shiba per diem.

Not far from Shiba is the celebrated hill of Atagosa, commonly called Atango-yama. Two flights of steps lead to the summit: the one broad and easy, for the use of women and children, the other narrow and steep, called the men's steps. The chief attraction of Atango-yama is the glorious view to be obtained from its summit. On a summer's morning it is very pleasant to stretch oneself on the mats of one of the rude sheds which are grouped on the plateau, to sip tea flavoured with cherry blossom, and to gaze at the scene spread around. Far away to the west, over the vast surface of brown roofs, over the haze which marks the pleasant country, rises the pure white cone of the Peerless Mountain. The man of Yedo is proud of his city and her associations; the Nagasaki merchant is proud of his placid land-locked harbour; the Hiogo man points with elation to the scenery of his torrent-streaked hills; but the Japanese, whether he comes from north, south, east, or west, is proud above all else of Fuji-yama. He paints it, he carves it in wood and stone, he rhymes to it, he dedicates volumes to it, he ascends it religiously, and to him it is the unapproached marvel and glory of the whole world. A Yedo boatman could not credit the writer when he was told that Fuji was not visible from Europe! The Japanese learns to pronounce its hundred names as a child; he can repeat endless stories and

fables about it long before he has mastered the difficulties of the Katakana syllabary; he never wearies of looking at it, and feels his momentary superiority to be incontestable when he can point it out for the first time to a stranger. Vast temples, beautiful scenery, gorgeous palaces, are well enough in their way, according to his ideas, but first of all see Fuji. To the south glitters the expanse of the bay of Yedo, dotted with innumerable junks and a few vessels of European build, and by the side of the bay runs the Tocaïdo, the great road of the Southern Sea, which may be traced by its brown fringe of houses until it is lost to sight amongst the hills behind which lies the European settlement of Yokohama. In the 'good old days' this was a terrible road to travel. Processions of great lords were continually passing up or down, and the penalty for not making a humble obeisance was a blow from a keen sword. *Rônins*—disbanded soldiers and gentlemen of the road—infested its length, and perhaps to no road in the world clings such a history of bloody occurrences as to the Tocaïdo. Now it is peaceful and quiet enough, for with the new order of things the great lords were banished and *Rônins* suppressed, and the completion of the railway has taken from it most of its ancient traffic and prosperity. Signs of its old importance, however, still exist in the shape of huge tea-houses, now mostly decayed and deserted, and innumerable temples and shrines by the wayside.

To the east, the expanse of brown roof is not so extensive, for there lies the quarter of the imperial castle, surrounded by the fortress-palaces of the old nobles; and beyond them again the stately pleasure of Uweno, of which more

anon. Looking over the almost interminable expanse of roofs, broken by swarming streets, it is easy for the visitor to believe the accounts given by travellers of the enormous population of the city; but a nearer inspection will show that although an immense acreage of ground is covered by houses, there are very few of them built with more than one story. The Atango-yama is a favourite resort of Yedo citizens on their frequent holidays and festivals. There is a temple to the fox-god Inari on the summit, but religion apparently plays a very subordinate part to pleasure. The plateau is surrounded on all sides by tea-booths, between which are dispersed archery-galleries, puppet-shows, and the sheds of public story-tellers; and the scene on a fine day, with the multi-coloured costumes, the sounds of laugh and jest, the universal prevalence of which has gained for the Japanese the title of the 'French of the East,' is at once striking and pleasing.

All about the district lying at the foot of Atango-yama are quaint little old temples lying buried away in dark odd corners,—heavy-eaved, weather-stained old places, whereto the sun rarely penetrates, and wherein filthy, unshaven old priests mumble away their lives in prayer. These temples are very pleasant places of sojourn for travellers who come for peace and retirement, and to whom the noise and bustle of the great tea-houses are distasteful. The poor old recluses are glad enough to place the best accommodation they can at the disposition of the visitor in return for a very moderate sum, and very often they are most valuable cicerones, besides being most amusing and agreeable companions. Of course the traveller who elects to follow this

mode of life must be prepared to 'rough it' to a certain extent: that is to say, he must not look for a bedstead, or a bath in the morning, and must learn to adapt himself to the sometimes trying ordeal of Japanese food. But by living in this style he will learn more of the genuine native life and character than by the perusal of any amount of books written by 'globe-trotters' after a six weeks' experience of the country.

On our way to Uweno, we may turn aside to the great temple at Asakusa of the hundred-handed god Quannon. At Asakusa there is constant festival, the sound of music and revelry is heard from morning till night, and the approaches to the temple are thronged at all hours by a crowd of worshippers and holiday-makers. At the temple itself there is but little to be noted, except the vast roof, visible for many miles round, the extraordinary collection of *ex votos* within, and the pure white horses of the god, which are harnessed to his triumphal car upon festival days. We only turn aside here to see the different phases of life and character, for the noise and dust and smell are rather trying, and we came to Yedo expressly to escape them, so that it is somewhat of a relief to get to the beautiful park of Uweno. At Uweno, before the days of Shiba, were the great temples, and the burial-places of many of the Shoguns; but during the civil war, about twenty years ago, between the last of the Shoguns and the dynasty of the present Mikado, the artillery of the opposing forces played sad havoc with both trees and temples. A few of the latter only are left, and, brilliant gems as they are, the inhabitants say that those which were destroyed exceeded

them in beauty. The island temple of the goddess Benten, however, still exists, and is a great source of attraction to pilgrims and travellers. But the natural beauty of the place has been repaired. The chief time at Uweno is during the festival of the cherry blossoms, when a great fair is held, lasting over several days, beneath the beautiful arcades of pink and white flower, and is considered to be the most popular festival of the year. But we prefer to see Uweno when it is alone in its beauty. One may ramble for hours amidst the solitudes of thicket and wooded knoll, soothed by the song of the birds and the sighing of the leaves, the eye delighted with the various tints and shadows, and the mind calm and tranquil, so far away from the turmoil of the busy world. Look where one will, there is something to please, with just a sufficiency of human life to give variety to the scene. Now a team of white-clad pilgrims with their broad hats and their tinkling bells; now a group of urchins gambolling amongst the trees, or a bevy of laughing damsels, or perchance a corporal's guard of the imperial army going its relief round—quaint, stunted little fellows, looking exquisitely miserable in their tight-fitting, much bestrapped and be-pouched uniforms. The temples are even sadder spectacles than those at Shiba, for in the interests of money-making there is a certain amount of care shown for the latter by the tea-house keepers of the neighbourhood and the priests; but Uweno is hopelessly, utterly deserted, and left to its fate. But, for this very reason, the artist should not omit them; in a few years they will be no more, and, choked with weeds and rubbish as they are, were it only for

their position amidst the thickets and foliage, they are well worth the trouble of reproduction on canvas.

All around the great city are pleasant suburbs, at any one of which a pleasant summer's day of rest and quiet may be spent. Proud as the Yedo man is of his city, he is a true child of Nature at heart, and seizes every opportunity to escape from the somewhat trying atmosphere of his street; thus, wherever we go, we find combined the charms of the country and the conveniences of town, and need never be at a loss to find a good meal and a tempting resting-place. We may go to Meguro, where is the tomb of the Shiyoku, of that robber and his faithful sweetheart whose life and death form the subjects of one of the most touching stories in the huge collection of Japanese romance, and which has been so admirably rendered by Mr. Mitford in his *Tales of Old Japan*. A quiet typical village is Meguro, with nothing especially noticeable about it but the humble tree-shaded grave of the lovers, yet every one who reads the story is so attracted by its simple pathos that a visit to the lonely grave invariably follows. There is the burial-ground at Takanawa, where, beneath forty-seven modest stones, lie the remains of the forty-seven *Rôin*s, whose story is also to be found in Mr. Mitford's book. There is Oji, famous for its waterfalls and its tea-gardens; Hama Goten, where are held the imperial summer *fêtes*; and a dozen other places, each famous for some one attraction.

Round the imperial castle, as has already been stated, are scattered the fortress-palaces of the great nobles, or rather what remains of them; for with the new order of things, so many lords were deposed and disgraced, their

palaces razed to the ground, and their estates confiscated, that the number of 'yashikis' which yet exist is very small, and most even of these have been converted into public offices. As a rule they are large, square, one-storied ranges of buildings, flanked at intervals by huge gateways. There is nothing ornamental about these outbuildings, for the days when the great lords enjoyed power were hard days, every man's hand was against his neighbour, and every man's house was literally his castle. Within the walls was the demesne, beautiful park-land or fanciful gardens, in the midst of which rose the lord's palace. Once the gateways were resplendent with armorial bearings, and curiously decorated with bronze-work; but the metal has been stolen, the crests have been effaced, and the solitary guardians are the families of sparrows—second only in boldness and sagacity to their London brethren—who have taken up their abode amidst the curious wood-work of the porches. Where the buildings have not been utilised, nothing but desolation meets the eye; the parks and gardens have gone to rack and ruin, and the buildings are fast falling to pieces with decay and neglect.

About the moats of the imperial castle there is always an air of peace and quiet. Of course the practical use of these moats has long since disappeared, and they are now regarded rather as curiosities than as defences of any value. The lotus almost encumbers them, and carp of fabulous size and age disport themselves beneath the shade of the broad green leaves, whilst here and there may be seen a pensive stork, standing upon one leg, and regarding the water solemnly, as if moralising over the changed aspect of affairs. The

fortifications must have been very formidable before the general use of artillery, and one may wander at will amongst the ravelins and counterscarps and demi-lunes, which block the road at every step. A sleepy dreamy air seems to pervade everything around; the sentry at the gate leans listlessly against the wall, his shako on the back of his head, his hands in his pockets, and his rifle slung over his shoulder; the coolies on the 'jinrickisha' stand are fast asleep; the trees of the castle gardens are motionless, and the flag over the distant British Legation hangs down against its pole.

Down by the Shinagawa entrance of the city, through which the Tocado comes straight away from Nagasaki, there existed a few years ago, and perhaps exists now, a famous tea-house, where often in the course of our wanderings we stop and make our mid-day meal. The quarter of Shinagawa has from time immemorial enjoyed a bad reputation. The *Rōmōs*—the lawless wanderers to whom allusion has already been made—chose it as their quarter; half the houses are tea-places of the lowest class, where the traveller, if not on his guard, runs a certain risk of being plundered, and perhaps murdered. Even in these days of comparative enlightenment, one cannot help being struck with the squalor and filth by which one is surrounded. Heavy-browed men sneak along under the eaves of the houses, with a sharp eye open to unconsidered trifles; dishevelled children tumble about the mud heaps in the street and pester the passer-by for a copper; brazen-faced women fight and argue at the tops of their voices, and the visitor instinctively hastens his pace to get out of the untempting neighbourhood. Yet, amidst this

poverty and dirt and vice, the famous tea-house of the Three Moons flourished for a great many years. The rich merchants and the great lords coming into the city from the country halted here to burnish themselves up a bit before presenting themselves in the bosoms of their families. It was a favourite halting-place for pilgrims, and, moreover, it enjoyed a great reputation for a peculiar stew of eels, the like of which could not be obtained elsewhere.

Behind the portion of the house which looks on the street were the pleasant state-rooms, which were exclusively retained for guests of high degree, looking on to a typical Japanese garden. This garden, although but a few yards square, was made so as to represent an entire country-side. There was a range of mountains in miniature, amongst which, of course, rose the cone of Fuji. There were rice-fields and valleys and wooded hills, and a torrent of real water, along the banks of which were dotted diminutive temples and tea-houses. Scattered amongst the dwarfed trees, twisted into the most eccentric shapes, were the red flowers of the wisteria, trained upon bamboo frames, banks of azalea, double camellia, and narcissus; lilies, purple irises, the scarlet 'momoji,' the yellow 'icho,' plum and cherry trees. Here and there amidst the blaze of colour stood a stone lantern, which at night throw a soft light from its half-moon shaped cavity on to the scene. Here the traveller might find a welcome rest after the toils of the long journey; his ear soothed by the sound of the wind through clusters of glass suspended to the roof, his eye gratified with the little panorama spread before him, and his thirst assuaged by draughts of famous wine.

In the outer house there were bustle and confusion from morning till night. Endless streams of travellers came and went, all demanding instant attention at the hands of the numerous maids. Now it would be a party of merchants travelling together for safety and company, with their pack-horses and their coolies; now a lord with his retinue, before whom all gave way, and whose swaggering attendants kept matters lively for host, hostess, and servants; or it would be a group of pilgrims, dusty and weather-stained; or a travelling theatrical troupe, returning from a starring tour in the provinces; or a party of priests, or even an imperial messenger. What a study for the observer of men and manners, or the artist, this clattering of dishes and drinking-bowls, this Babel of voices, this fluttering of garments, this play of light and shade, this continual animation and excitement! What a change from the quiet of Uweno or the shady solitude of Shiba! But the glory of the old tea-house faded with the decay of the great road. The 'steam-breathing dragon' absorbed all its customers; and although the sign still hung out, and the waitresses still implored the traveller to rest his honourable limbs, the mats began to get dirty and ragged—not from use, but from neglect—the face of the great brazier grew dim and tarnished, the deft attendants with their bright-patterned robes dwindled in number and grew dusky in appearance, all sorts and conditions of men swaggered and commanded where before but a certain class were received; and when the writer last beheld it, the Three Moons had descended to the level of a common fifth-rate eating-house.

When we have exhausted the 'lions' of Yedo, there is yet a

wide field of exploration left open to us in the odd nooks and corners and hidden byways in the heart of the city, and upon either of the great rivers.

We can saunter about, poking our noses into the 'old refuse' shops, in which very often we may light upon a genuine curio above the suspicion of being manufactured expressly for the European market, as are very many of the articles exposed for sale in the more pretentious shops of Yokohama and Yedo. The writer has around him half a dozen such curios, picked up in this desultory manner, for which collectors would willingly pay double what was given for them. Amongst them is a fine helmet of the old captain of the Castle Ward Fire-Brigade—a cumbersome metal affair, adorned with plumes, grotesquely carved, and dented in many a place. There is also a diminutive set of lacquer-ware, which belonged to the mighty lord of Sinano, whose cognisance—a group of six double circles—is stamped in gold upon each piece; there is a real Muramasa blade, which was long used by the public executioner; and a statue of the fox-god from the temple of the Ten Thousand Gods. The wine-shops, too, afford endless amusement to the traveller; for it is there one meets with the most eccentric varieties of Japanese life and character. If we have picked up sufficient of the Yedo colloquial to understand the drift of what is said, we are enabled to see what an inexhaustible fund of humour and caricature there is in the Japanese nature. We may learn, too, about the famous vintages which sleep in the huge straw-bound casks which surround the shop; about the 'Flower in full bloom,' of the prince of wines, for which the

emblem is a red carp 'saltant,' of that celebrated wine which is said to possess the three sterling qualities of appeasing hunger, keeping out the cold, and inducing sleep; of the 'otari,' with the sign of a target pierced by an arrow. We may watch the various craftsmen at their work—the fan artists, the paper-makers, the weavers of mats, and the sandal-makers. We find them all civil and obliging, and ready to give any kind of information; invariably full of song and jest, rarely discontented and surly. There, in a corner, is a cloth suspended between four twigs of bamboo, and close by it a ladle of water. Each passer-by throws some water on to the linen, and does not pass on until it has filtered through. Strange custom, and yet touching in its simplicity! Whenever the traveller sees one of these he knows that some poor woman has recently died in childbirth; and the custom of pouring the water is intended to illustrate a pious prayer on the part of passers-by, that her soul may go pure to its last rest.

If the sun be too hot for even such rambles as these, we can get perfect quiet and a cool breeze by hiring a gondola-like boat at the Great Bridge, and making a pilgrimage along the silent highway of the Sumida Gawa or the Oga-wa. We can lie at ease on the mats beneath the light bamboo roof of the boat, and gaze through the latticed blinds at the scene. There is an enormous floating population at Yedo, so that great care must be exercised in steering between the crowds of junks, sampans, and barges, which move in all directions, blissfully ignorant of any such tyranny as a rule of the road. We pass under the Japen Bridge, from which all the

distances in the empire are measured; past great tea-houses, which, upon fine nights, are lighted brilliantly and effectively with many-coloured lanterns, and whence the sounds of feasting and revelry proceed until the small hours of the morning; by the great fish-market, which is a scene of bustle and animation long before three-quarters of the population have left their beds; by the great 'go-downs' or warehouses, wherein are stored the Government supplies of rice and grain; under more bridges—grotesque timber affairs, swarming with humanity—and so on until we get out into the country. The water is not clear and limpid for a long time, as sanitary regulations are yet undreamt of in Yedo, and all the sewage which is not used for manure in the country is incontinently cast into the river; but it is very pleasant drifting along aimlessly, soothed almost to sleep by the gentle rocking motion of the boat, and by the murmured chant of the coolies as they tug at their oars.

So we may pass the hours of the pleasant summer days, amused, instructed, delighted, and soothed at will. We are perfectly independent, and need not fear lavish expenditure; for if we trust to our own legs we escape the extortions of the 'jinrickisha' coolies; and, if we can adapt ourselves to the native food, we avoid the risk of being poisoned at an extravagant rate at one of the so-called European restaurants. The great capital is altering day by day. Old landmarks are disappearing, and the new influences are driving all before them; so that it is with intense pleasure that we look back to summer days in the city of Yedo.

LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS.

We stood on the shore at the evening's close,
And we watched the sunlight wane ;
And we felt, though we uttered it not : ' Who knows,
As the long year comes and the long year goes,
If haply we meet again ?

The clouds in the west, all amber and red,
Seemed the shore of the Unknown Land ;
And the shivering rays of the sunshine shed
A tremulous light on the waves as they fled
From the edge of the desolate strand.

But while we were watching, a darksome spot
Lay there in the golden haze,—
It was only a boat from the shore that shot ;
But it crossed the red like an inky blot,
And darkened the sunshine's blaze.

And I bitterly thought : ' It is always so
In the face of the pleasant and fair !
In the brightest moments our lives can know,
The shadows are hovering to and fro ;
The blot on the picture is there !'

Then I took your hand and I held it, dear,
As the sorrow awoke in me,
For I knew the moment of parting was near ;
And I shrank from the farewell spoken here,
And I hated that boat on the sea.

But an answering thought arose in you,
I could tell by the touch of your hand,
Though your eyes still followed the western hue,
Till all of a sudden the glory grew,
And spread to our feet on the sand.

Then you turned to me with a look in your eyes—
I shall never forget—and said :
' The blot was there, but it fades, it dies
In the tender light of the golden skies ;
It is lost in the amber and red !'

For the boat had sailed to the distant verge,
Where it shone like the evening star,
And I saw its glittering sails emerge
Like a white-winged bird on the crest of the surge,
Ere she soareth to heaven afar.

And when I recall your words, dear friend,
With your look so tender and fond,
My heart is still, and its questionings end ;
For whatever the shadows, I know they will blend
In the glory that shineth beyond !

HARRIET L. CHILDE-PEMBERTON.

THE WEDMORES' 'HOP.'

A Jersey Story.

'My dear, they are as good as engaged; they always were together even before Gertie was in her teens; and two years ago, when she was sixteen, there was a tremendous row. Miss Fox, in her usual amiable way, congratulated both Colonel Moray and Mrs. Clive on the engagement. Of course the result was astonishment, indignation, Percy and Gertie called up to judgment, vows of eternal constancy, Gertie sent to school for six months; and ever since then, whenever Harry has been over here, six "rounds" together at every hop, and all the squares sat out in the garden, whether Mrs. Clive liked it or not. I suppose, now Percy has this money left him, it will be all right.'

So spoke Miss May Faulkner, a Jersey belle, aged twenty, to her companion, Clare Grattan, a girl two years her senior, who had come from England on a visit to the Clives above mentioned.

The girls were strolling slowly along the St. Helier's broad white sands; they were lagging rather behind the rest of their party, which had split itself up into two other couples.

Clare Grattan's heart was heavy with a dull oppression of pain, the result of a fear become a reality, as she answered,

'Then you think Mr. Moray' (there was a momentary pause before she spoke this name) 'and Gertie care for one another?'

'Think so? look there!'

As May spoke, she pointed to the figures of a young girl and

man who were standing almost at the water's edge, their outlines sharply defined against the sunset glow. Their faces were turned towards the sea, away from Clare; but she, looking at the young man's bent head, the girl's upturned one, could fancy only too well the look of Percival Moray's brown eyes. Had she not known it to her own cost?

She had been a fool, she thought, and only that afternoon had been happy in her folly. Clare Grattan had only been six weeks at Jersey, but that time had been fuller and more intense to her than all the years of her yet early womanhood; she had learnt her own heart at length had grown into love.

For the last month she had found herself, whenever she was at a dance, waiting with a feverish impatience for the advent of a tall slight figure with a bright honest face, the charm of which it was difficult to analyse, but impossible not to feel. She had listened every morning, as she sat in the breakfast-room with Gertie, for a cheerful voice calling them from the garden below, and begging them to come out for a practice at lawn-tennis; and she had felt a new intense pleasure in the rare talks, in which Percival seemed to show her glimpses of that other 'soul side' which a man keeps 'to show a woman when he loves her.' He suited her as no one else had ever done, and she had fancied that he wished to let her know that he loved her.

And yet she had feared some-

times—and, as it had proved, had had reason for her fears—that Gertie and Percival had loved one another; and how, thought Clare now, could any girl who had once cared for Percival Moray become indifferent to him?

Clare still was pondering, when Gertie turned her steps towards her friends.

‘Do you know it is nearly seven o’clock, Clare? We shall have a nice scolding from mamma if we are late for dinner, and we promised to be at the Wedmores’ by a quarter to nine.’

Clare smiled faintly.

‘How horribly fagged you do look! Not at all like dancing. These last three nights have been too much for you.’

‘Are you tired?’ asked Percy of Miss Grattan, bending towards her.

If he had only known the sharp thrill of pain the tone of his voice caused her! She was glad to hear her own sound unconstrained as she answered,

‘Not at all, thank you.’

‘We have come too far along the sands; I ought to have remembered. Won’t you take my arm?’

‘O no; I am all right.’

He said no more, but, turning again to Gertie, called out to two other individuals who had apparently forgotten everything else in the contemplation of a dead starfish; at all events, they had been gazing at it for full five minutes, when Percy’s voice reached them.

‘Hullo, Rashton! come on, it’s getting late.’

Thus addressed, the two defaulters moved slowly towards the rest of the little group. Their conversation, as they strolled along, was after this wise:

‘Be a brick, Miss Wedmore, and try to give a miserable wretch a chance.’

‘How can I? I can’t make Gertie like you.’

‘Keep that fellow Moray out of the way, so that I may try my luck at least.’

‘You’re doing your very best to ruin it by seeming to flirt with me. Gertie is awfully jealous, mind.’

‘Hang it! I beg your pardon, I mean—’

‘You needn’t, I don’t mind it.’

‘I think I have most reason for jealousy. Why, I know that she and Moray were spoons once, even if they are not now.’

‘Yes, but Gertie can’t know that I am only playing confidante.’

‘Never you mind; only help me, and you shall see what the bridesmaids’ lockets will be like.’

‘For shame, Captain Rashton! bribery and corruption. By the way, I have a weakness for opals.’

‘I’ll make a note of that,’ answered Captain Rashton, taking out his pocket-book for the purpose.

Certainly, to an uninitiated eye, the two had decidedly as much the appearance of flirting as Percival and Gertie had, and a keen observer might have connected that fact with the wrathful flash of Miss Clive’s blue eyes, and her sharp petulant answers when addressed. Clare did not do so, but imagined that these signs of ill-temper in her friend were owing to some fault of Percy’s, and inwardly determined, now that she knew of the understanding between Mr. Moray and Gertie, to abstain even from any appearance of intimacy with the former, lest it should wound her friend, whom she knew was a little inclined to be exacting.

‘She needn’t be afraid, though,’ thought poor Clare to herself. ‘I know he is true. If he loved me, I would trust him entirely.’

The party broke up at the top of King-street, Florence Wedmore going one way, and the three other girls holding the opposite course.

'Good-bye for an hour and a half,' said Florence. 'Captain Raashon and Percy, you are to come back home with me and give the floors a last polish.'

If Gertie's face could be said to be dark at any time, it certainly was, as she with Clare and May turned towards that quarter of St. Helier's popularly known as 'the Shingles.'

'What a flirt Florence is!' she remarked with virtuous indignation.

'People who live in glass houses,' answered May. 'The idea of you accusing any one of flirting, Gertie, is rather too fine, considering the way you have always treated Percy.'

'Percy and I understand one another,' answered Gertie curtly.

'That is a comfort, at all events,' retorted May, 'for nobody else does. Well, here is our house, so ta-ta for the present.'

Two more minutes, and Clare and Gertie reached the latter's home, called the Retreat, apparently because it faced the road.

The dinner that evening at the above-mentioned abode was not very cheerful. Gertie was cross, Clare occupied by her bitter thoughts of what she had learnt that afternoon, and Mrs. Clive, Gertie's mother (Miss Clive was an only child), found it very hard work to maintain anything like conversation.

Directly it was ended, Gertie ran up to her room to dress for that evening's dance at the Wedmores'. She was standing in her white wrapper by the toilet-table unfastening the twisted rope of her pretty hair, which shone like gold in the still lingering after-

light, when her eye fell on a half-withered bouquet of passion-flower, ferns, and tube roses, which was placed in a glass of water on the table. Some memory connected with it made her cheeks flush, her brain throb, her eyes burn with stinging tears, which she tried to force back by hard biting of her underlip.

'So,' she thought, 'he neglects me and flirts with Florence! Very well, sir, tit for tat. I'll revenge myself with Percy, and if I don't make you suffer—that's all!'

Meanwhile Clare, in her room above, was trying to convince herself against her heart's assurance that Percy did not love her, and that if he did (illogical but girlish sequence), it was her duty to Gertie to reject his affection, and bid him render it to her to whom it was due.

She would be loyal to her friend at all costs to herself.

A light tap at the door, and Gertie entered, looking very pretty in a soft white silk much smothered with lace.

'How shall I do, Clare?'

'I never saw you look so well,' said Miss Grattan, and she spoke the truth. Gertie's eyes were shining like bits of sunlit summer sea; her cheeks 'as crimson dyed ingrain;' her fair hair was ruffled in that sweet order of disorder which best suits a Grouse face and low white brow.

'Will you put in my flowers?' said Gertie, holding up the great pink bells of the belladonna lily for Clare to fasten in her hair.

'Thank you, dear,' as it was accomplished, and the little lady pirouetted round, humming a waltz in a manner which caused Clare to exclaim,

'Gertie, are you bewitched! What is the matter with you?'

'Nothing,' said Gertie, bursting out singing in her sweet, rather small soprano :

"Si vous n'avez rien à me dire,
Pourquoi venir auprès de moi?"

O Clare, how badly Miss Fox sang that the other night, like a peacock with the influenza! And she needn't ask the question, considering how people avoid her.'

'Still, the question is rather a pertinent one sometimes,' said Clare lightly, yet with a ring of pain in her tone.

'Yes,' said Gertie bitterly; then with a sudden faltering of her voice and a burst of tears, 'O Clare, I am so unhappy!'

Clare put her arms round her and let her sob for a few moments in silence, then she spoke:

'I am very sorry; but, Gertie, you needn't be afraid; I am sure he cares for you.' Her words were very brave, and her lips did not tremble as she spoke.

'Do you think so?' and Gertie lifted her head from where it had rested on her friend's breast. 'But why does he flirt so? I am proud, and don't show it, but it pains me dreadfully, Clare. I feel sometimes as if— O, why should he hurt me when I love him?'

'Is she trying to ask me not to flirt with him?' thought Gertie's friend, and the hot glow of a wounded pride, far deeper and stronger than that of the younger girl, burnt her pale cheek at the idea that she, Clare Grattan, should be suspected of flirting. It was some little time before she slowly answered:

'I should trust him and be sure he deserves it; and, Gertie'—she spoke nervously and as if frightened lest her friend should be offended—'I wouldn't give him any cause for jealousy by being too much to-night with—'

'There's the carriage,' said Gertie, springing up. 'I'm very

sorry, dear, I can't take your advice, as it's the exact opposite to what I mean to do. I shall treat him just as he treats me.'

With which words Miss Clive ran down-stairs, and Clare had no opportunity for saying more.

'How good of you to be early!' exclaimed Florence Wedmore, entering the cloak-room as Clare and Lottie were disencumbering themselves of their wraps. 'I've put you down to play two waltzes, Lottie, and Miss Grattan for one.'

'O, I will play as often as you like,' said Clare. 'I am rather tired, and don't want to dance much.'

Florence shook her head.

'I won't victimise you,' she said. 'Ah, there's the first waltz beginning. I put down Miss Fox for that; she always plays the *Faust*, and thumps so. It's as well to get her performance over before many people come.'

A Jersey hop is very much more primitive in its arrangements than an English carpet-dance. At the former entertainment the carpet is nearly always up—so far Jersey dancers are exacting—and the boards are polished, as the doors are removed, the furniture piled away, and the lights fixed by the young men *intimes* of the house. All your friends' plate is held in requisition, and mirrors, flowers, and other such adornments are freely lent and borrowed. Ices and sit-down suppers are rare; lemonade, claret-cup, and light refreshments being usually the order of the day. If you have a friend who possesses a butler, borrow him with the plate; if not, rest contented without one. Bands are seldom seen or heard, the general arrangement being that the performance of the music shall be divided among the guests, each family being expected to supply so many dances. They are very pleasant, very informal, and

sometimes slightly wild, these Jersey hops. I am not speaking, of course, of the stately dances given in the aristocratic region of Rouge Bouillon, nor of the military balls, but of the small hops of from thirty to eighty, principally in the Shingles.

The Wedmores' was a pattern one of its kind—bright, gay, with all the girls pretty and good dancers—it is hard to find a Jersey girl who is not both. The dancing-room soon grew full; but neither Mr. Moray nor Captain Rashton had yet appeared, though they went to their respective abodes to don evening dress shortly before eight o'clock. The night was so sweet and warm that the piano had been moved into the verandah which surrounded the house, and which had been hung with four paper lanterns—a proceeding which caused many old ladies to remark enthusiastically that 'it looked like fairyland.' Outside this fairyland was a cool, calm, scented garden, a wide hushed sky, moonless, but bright with stars; and far off the restless splash of the waves on the shore. Inside was a lit room, gay with evergreens, and bright with many-coloured dresses, pretty faces, and the rhythmical sound of dancing feet.

Clare sat at the piano between these two worlds; the light falling on her showed her to the eyes of a man who had entered by the garden-way, as only an intimate of the Wedmores would have dared to do. There were many people near her in the verandah—girls without partners, girls sitting the dance out with their partners, old ladies talking scandal, old gentlemen talking politics, a nervous boy who dared not dance, a gloomy man who wished to do so and could not—but Percy Moray only saw Clare.

She was dressed in a simply-made dress, unfashioned and untortured by fashion, of soft silk, the colour of the outer leaves of the daffodil, which deepened in the folds of the drapery, with subtle gradations of shade. In her black hair were set two or three stephanotis stars; the outline of her face was calm and fair—Percy thought sad. The heavy-lidded gray eyes were not fixed on her music; her hands moved mechanically.

How different she was from other women! How unlike her dress, her face, her words, to anything he had ever known! He was twenty-seven, and he loved her, loved her, loved her—the words formed themselves to the rhythm of the passionate German waltz she was playing. It was a conventional sickly-sweet thing; but to the young man it now, for the first time, became lively, and full of meaning—the expression which his love needed. He wished that he and she were waltzing to it. Anyhow, he would do the next best thing—ask her for the following dance.

Alas, before he could move to her, the waltz ended. Clare was monopolised by another man, to whom Florence introduced her; and Harry himself was discovered by Miss Wedmore, who insisted on introducing him to a red-haired heiress, who smiled sweetly, as she hoped Mr. Moray did not mind *deux temps*—she did not dance anything else.

Percival Moray was a lieutenant of Hussars, whose father lived in Jersey. The boy himself, when a child, became a favourite with his mother's brother, who proclaimed him as his heir, petted him as a child, sent him to Eton, bought him his commission, only asking in return that he should spend half of his

holidays and leaves with him; and who had died a twelvemonth ago, leaving Percy two thousand a year, and a pretty old house in Kent.

So two months before this evening Moray sold out and came over to Jersey to win his old love; when, to his great disgust, he discovered that he no longer cared for her, nor she for him. Still they went on playing at love till Clare Grattan came on her visit to the Clives, and Percy fell honestly and heartily in love with her.

Nevertheless, he felt he was, in a manner, bound to marry Gertie if she wished it—and it was hardly likely, he thought, that she did not; for the girl was full of wounded pride and indignation against the man she loved, and held the sweet jest up by dancing, talking, and flirting with Percy so desperately, that she deceived both him and Captain Rashton into the idea that she was in love with the former.

It was full half an hour before Percy was able to gain Clare's side and ask for 'the dance you promised me.'

She knew it would be far more marked if she refused, so took his arm as the first bars of the waltz sounded.

Clare was fond of waltzing, and Percy's long swinging, yet perfectly smooth, step suited her better than any other. She could not help enjoying the swift motion, and the certainty that under his guidance she was safe from the merciless knocking and bumping against other couples, to which many men subject their unfortunate partners.

The last slow chords sounded, and they stopped.

'Ah,' said Percy, drawing a long breath, 'it's warm.'

'It is,' assented Clare.

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'But the garden is cool,' said Percy.

'So people seem to think,' she answered, laughing.

For every one had poured out from the ballroom to the cool night air, and white dresses glimmered dimly among the trees on the small lawn.

'They have placed the refreshment-table out there,' said the young man. 'Don't you want some claret-cup?'

The want was supplied, and they sat down on a rustic seat near the table. The lawn seemed nearly as full as the dancing-room had been a few minutes before; and Clare watched Gertie, as she saw her evidently engaged in a furious flirtation with a man whom she knew Percy disliked.

'She must do it to vex him,' Clare thought, quite ignorant that Gertie had not once thought of Mr. Moray this evening.

From the verandah sounded the warning bars of a galop, and the lawn began to be deserted. Clare would have risen, but Percy stopped her.

'Don't go yet,' he said; 'at least, if you are not engaged for this.'

'But I am.'

'Then let your partner find you.'

'No, I really must go. I want—'

'O, I know what you want—to avoid me.'

'Mr. Moray!'

'I beg your pardon if I am rude; but how have I offended you?'

'You have not.'

'Then why do you always try to escape speaking to me? What have I done?'

'Nothing. I—'

'Why do you stop? O Clare, Clare! don't you know that I love you?'

There was silence. For one

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moment a great pulse of joy throbbed through the girl's whole being; and then came the sickening remembrance of Gertie.

'You must know it,' the young man said passionately. 'You must have seen! And I thought—Clare, can't you love me?'

There was no one else near to hear the heavily-whispered 'No.'

'Then what made me think? for I did think— Clare, you are not a flirt like these girls here. Why were you kind if you never meant to have me? Why did you let me imagine it?'

She could only say, 'I beg your pardon,' humbly.

'Why should you? Only look straight at me and say, "I do not love you," and I will leave you; but not till then.'

She could not tell that lie to him who trusted her; and yet she did not wish to betray her real reason and Gertie's pride.

'You don't speak; you do care for me! I knew it, my Clare!'

He would have taken her hand; but she withdrew it.

'How about Gertie?' she said quietly. 'Are you not engaged?'

He did not answer for a moment; then said:

'Is that childish bond to stand between you and me? Clare, Gertie and I are nothing to each other now; we have outgrown our fancy long ago.'

'You may have; she has not. Percy, if I trust you with her heart secret, respect it. She loves you, and all her gaiety is put on to hide her pain at your neglect. O, think how base I must feel—her friend whom she trusted—to let you speak so to me?'

'You base! you, Clare darling! I've been a thoughtless brute; and I see it now. Forgive me!'

'Yes.'

'And love me?'

He spoke timidly, as knowing

he would be denied. Her answer came very low,

'I shall have to learn not to do so.'

'Then you do?' he said quickly.

'I cannot help it;' and there was the break of a sob in her voice.

'And you ask me to give you up, knowing that? To win my heaven on earth, and turn away from it? Clare, you cannot.'

'I must,' and the bitter agony of the tone only showed the firmness of her resolve. 'Percy, you are honourable; don't make me despise you, as I should if you were false to Gertie.'

'But, Clare, I love you, not Gertie.'

'She loves you,' Clare answered, with the sublime unreasonableness of a woman. 'And right is right, though it is hard—O, so hard!'

'It is something to hear you say that it is hard,' he answered, in a smothered tone. 'But you don't know how cruel you are to me, or how you have grown into my life. I never meant to love; but this evening when I saw you I felt I must speak and know if you—'

She laid her hand on his.

'And you have made it all the harder for me,' he said. 'If I had still thought you did not care for me, I might have turned to Gertie; but now—'

'You will do what is right,' she answered, while the tears would spring to her eyes.

'Right! Is it right to marry a girl I do not love?'

'You will learn to do so; she is so dear, you cannot help it.'

'Cannot I? Clare, your face is the one face for me on earth; you the one woman.'

She rose, blindly, nobly wrong in her self-denial.

'I cannot listen to more,' she

said, in a choked voice; to her own heart she added, 'I dare not.'

'Clare!' he rose and caught her wrists. There was no one to see; the garden was again dark and silent, except where the light streamed from the verandah. 'I only want to say good-bye.'

'What do you mean?'

'Do you think I could go on as I am doing now—see you for the next month every day, and know that you love me, and that you will never be more to me than now? It would drive me mad. No; I shall leave here by to-morrow's boat.'

'But, Percy—'

'You need not think that,' he said, with a sudden fierce burst of anger; 'if she and I were alone on this earth, I would never now marry Gertie. You have done her no good—or, rather, no harm. Dear little thing, she deserves a better fate than a husband who does not care for her.'

There was a silence; then Percy spoke again, his voice strangely humble and gentle:

'One kiss, Clare, for our good-bye; only one, my dear.'

'No,' she said; and her tone was both stern and surprised.

He said no more; side by side they returned to the house. Clare's heart was full with the unutterable longing to turn to the man beside her and say, 'Stay;' Percy's with a wild turmoil of anger and love. He felt dimly that his love gave him a right over Clare; that her power, 'woman-like to weave sweet words,' had been exerted wrongly; that her sacrifice was a needless one, which would mar both their lives and for no good.

A hard grasp of her hand, a low spoken good-bye in answer to her whispered 'Forgive me!' and he was gone. When would she see him again? Dizzy and

faint with dull misery, she sat down in the verandah.

'I think this is our dance?'

The voice woke her up, and she saw standing by her a tall man with a puffy, foolish, good-natured face.

'I am so very tired,' she answered; 'will you excuse me?'

'Certainly. You look faint, Miss Grattan; may I get you a glass of water?'

'If you will be so kind.'

The water did her good; she steadied her nerves, and gazed in through the open window at the dancers. She saw Gertie, glowing and radiant, the prettiest girl in the room, waltzing with Captain Rashton, looking utterly happy, careless and contented. For one moment Clare felt a bitter anger against this girl, for whose sake she had given up the supreme beauty and joy of life, and who would never know it. What did Gertie need more than she had at the present moment? Seemingly nothing; and yet Clare remembered the childish tempest of sorrow she had witnessed a few hours ago, and was glad she had been loyal to her friend, even though at so dear a price.

The dance was over. The two girls climbed rather wearily up the bedroom stairs of the Retreat.

'Come in here, Clare,' said Gertie, as they reached the latter's door.

Clare's wearied eyes looked piteously at her friend, as her lips repeated for the third time that evening the excuse, 'I am so tired.'

'Only for a minute, dear.' Gertie drew her in, and shut the door, then said, 'You were right.'

'What do you mean?' asked Clare, stupidly amazed.

'He loves me,' said Gertie, pressing her small hands close against the faded pink lilies on

her breast ; ' he always has, and I was *only* a little fool to think he was flirting with Florence.'

' He ! Who ?'

' Robert—I mean Captain Raston. Clare, are you ill ?'

For Clare's face was white, her eyes closed, the heavily-cut lips closed together.

' No, Gertie ; I am quite well. But I don't understand. Don't you love Per—Mr. Moray ?'

' Love Percy ! I left off doing so more than a year ago. I only used him as a decoy-duck to draw Robert on.'

' And in doing so may have unknowingly wrought evil to two people,' thought poor Clare.

Percy was to leave Jersey on the morrow ; she might never see him again ; he might go abroad, and never hear of the real state of things.

But she remembered it was hardly likely that a man possessing both relations and friends in Jersey would not hear very quickly of his old love's engagement to another man ; and she wished Gertie happiness very warmly, and was glad in her gladness, staying with her more than half an hour, listening to her diatribes about Captain Raston.

She was glad to be alone, though, in her own room ; alone, free to thank God for the great hap-

piness which yet might be hers.

And was ; for in less than a fortnight later Clare was standing under the shade of a tall flowering myrtle, the aromatic scent of which filled the autumn air with bitter sweetness. Percy was by her, very gravely contented, and on her left hand was the shimmer of a sapphire ring she had only worn a week.

' You came back very quickly,' she said. ' Were you afraid I should forget you ?'

' I wanted to be sure,' he answered.

' You needn't have been afraid,' and her face glowed a little.

' Percy ?'

' Clare ?'

' Do you know, I almost think I was in the wrong that night.'

' I am sure you were.'

She laughed, but her tone was grave as she said,

' Are you angry with me ?'

' Angry with you for showing how strong you were to do what seemed right to you ? You must think me a brute, Clare !'

' It seemed to tear my heart out to have to deny you ; and I see I was wrong now.'

' So do I ; but I am not sorry for it, Clare, for it taught me'—he drew her closer to him as he spoke—' how far above myself is the woman I love.'





MY LADY GOLDENTHAIR.

See the Poem.

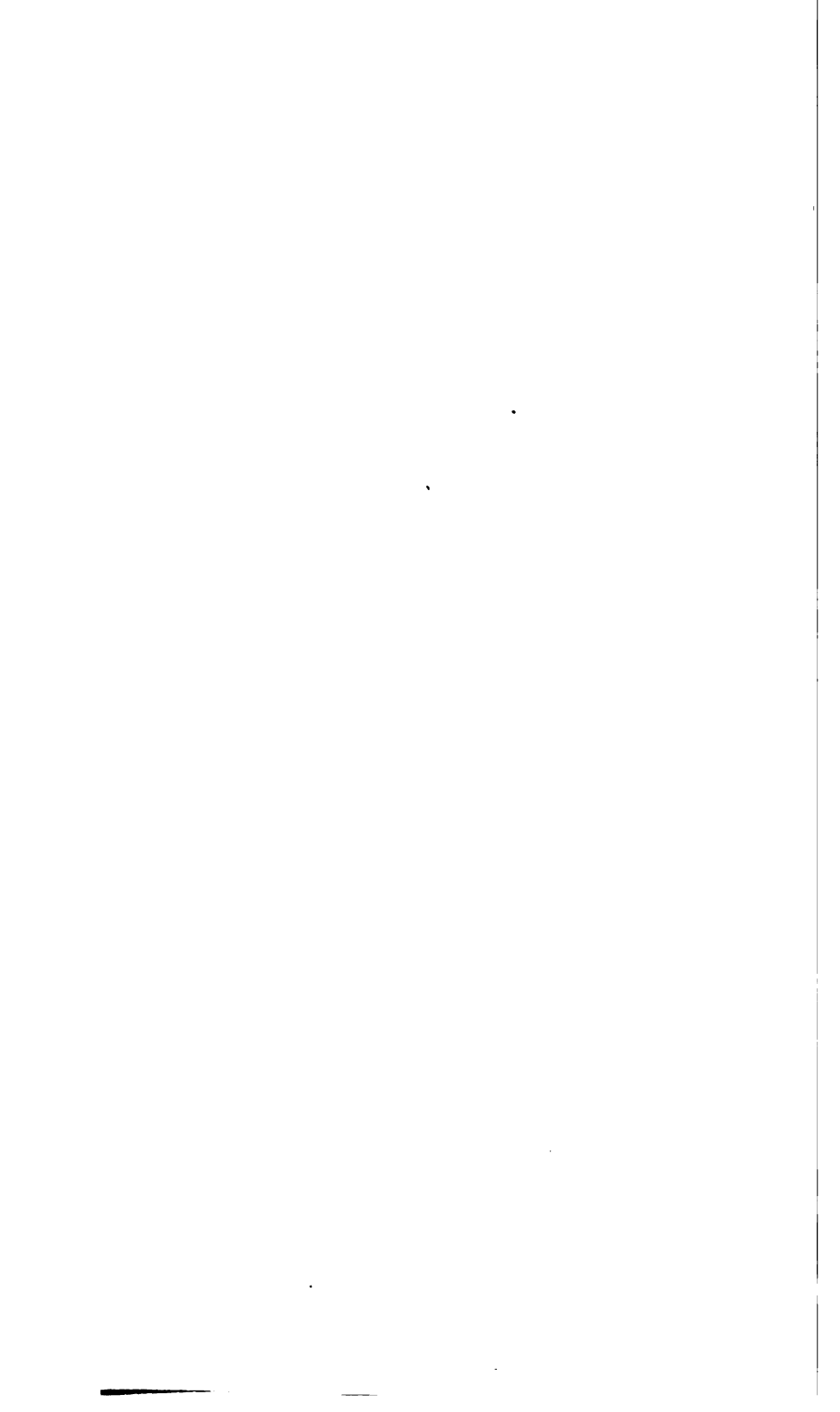
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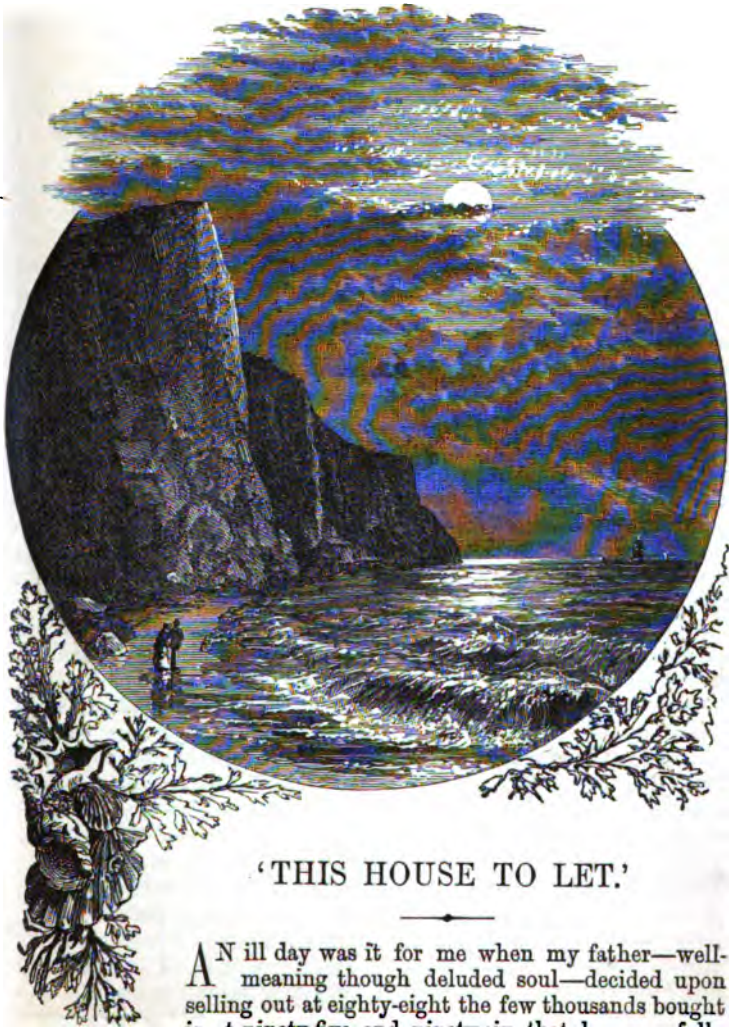
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LONDON SOCIETY.

The Holiday Number for 1882.



‘THIS HOUSE TO LET.’

AN ill day was it for me when my father—well-meaning though deluded soul—decided upon selling out at eighty-eight the few thousands bought in at ninety-five and ninety-six that lay peacefully

in the Funds, in order to invest the same in house property, and to secure, as he imagined, a better interest for the money. There, I know not for how many years, had this quiescent little sum lain reposing, giving no one trouble anyway, and only making its existence known by the yielding of its half-yearly dividends.

Ever in repair, needing no paid agent to look after it from time to time, its interest always forthcoming as regularly as January or July came round, causing no such fear as that of being tenantless for six months or so; a source of no anxiety whatever, but of un-failing income, and inaccessible to all outsiders, save, indeed, the Government assessor, who pounced on so much in the pound. But then it yielded only three per cent, and interest at so low a figure had grown intolerable. My father's City friends assured him that such interest was no interest at all, and that none but a non-enterprising man like him would put up with it; that Consols had gone quite out of fashion, and in these days were in vogue only among old maids and wards in Chancery. Three per cent, indeed! Why, some investments—mines and banking, for example—were at that moment paying, many of them, thirty; several railway lines were declaring dividends at the rate of fifteen; and as to ten per cent, why, that was to be had for money any day.

But my father had an aversion to speculations, as he termed them: 'liability,' however 'limited,' was a thing, to his mind, fraught with peril; and perhaps it was as well, considering that some of these alluring investments have of late declined paying interest or principal, and others have gone to irrecoverable smash, that he gave

a wide berth to such beguiling baits for capital.

'But house property,' thought he, 'cannot run away, and involves no liability. Seven per cent, if you can get it, is certainly better than three. I shall double my income by the change; and if at any time it should give trouble the property can be sold, and must realise somewhere near the money.'

Such reasoning was conclusive; so in for house property the good man went, not resting until, bit by bit, he had exchanged the whole of his property in stock for its equivalent in bricks and mortar. A handful of shops, a little land, and two or three private dwellings in different parts of London became henceforth the family estate, the rents of which we were to look to for our livelihood in time to come.

Happening in the natural course of things, as my father's survivor, to drop in for my share of these said tenements, I soon had, too, my share of what, as landlord of my portion, was entailed upon me in the shape of harassment and worry. Between the carelessness and craftiness of agents on the one hand, and the exasperating ways of tenants on the other, I can say with truth I have scarcely known what peace of mind was since the unhappy day when I came in for my property, and nothing but the dread of those inevitable harpies who feast on title-deeds and fatten by conveyancing prevents my selling off the whole lot at an appalling loss, and buying in again into the Threes, up as they are just now to 101.

I could have borne, perhaps, with the shoppy portion of my house property, for, so far as my experience goes, I should say tradesfolk do not make bad tenants; but what has caused my chief annoyance is a house, not

a shop, situated in a genteelish part of town, not perhaps so fashionable as it was twenty years ago, but still quite suited for the occupation of a gentleman's family. The nights I have lain awake thinking of this odious house are countless. Whether tenanted or empty, it has been to me a source of constant torment; for really I know not which occasions most anxiety—to secure a decent tenant for one's vacant property, or how to get rid of the occupier when a bad one. I should be loth to think that my experience is a sample of what falls to the lot of all who own private residences. I trust others are more fortunate than I have been. Possibly as time goes on I shall feel the worry less; but I certainly should like to know whether others have been bothered and victimised as I have. There is always a certain comfort in the feeling that one has, at any rate, brethren in adversity.

My troubles as a landlord began full early—within, I think, a month of my succeeding to this envied position, and when, as might be supposed, I was alike ignorant of my rights and duties in my new capacity.

The house I have already referred to was at that time occupied by a retired captain of the navy and his lady, who, from their being unblest with encumbrance, my father had considered desirable tenants, small boys and girls being, as a rule, deemed not the best conservators of house property; but I remember having often heard my father say he had a troublesome customer to deal with in this gentleman, so much so that at times he feared he must give him notice to quit, from the frequency and unreasonableness of his demands. It was plain this man had no idea of leaving me long unmolested; for, about

the period I speak of, the following favour from him reached me by post:

'Sir,—I write to inform you that, if I am to remain your tenant, there are many things I shall want done to this house, and which I should wish to point out to you if you will be good enough to call at your earliest convenience. I have decided upon writing directly to you, instead of to your agent, Mr. Grasper, as I have invariably found that person uncivil and disobliging.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

'CHAS. HAWSER.'

Now, I knew my father had made it a rule to avoid coming in contact with his tenants in general, and with this one in particular, preferring to transact business, whatever it might be, with Mr. Grasper, and invariably referring tenants to that functionary. It would have been quite as well if I had done the same. And here I respectfully tender this word of advice to all newly-made house-owners: Avoid from the first your tenants if you possibly can. Decline all correspondence with them, beyond civilly acknowledging their communications. Refer them to your man of business. Give them to understand you leave all to him. So long as you screen yourself behind your agent, you are in many respects safe; you can defy threats and importunities alike, and act as arbitrarily as you please. Let that hard-hearted medium have the credit of everything done or left undone. You have to pay him, so by all means let him bear the odium if there be any. He will not feel it, whereas the chances are you will. But if once a tenant gets at you and hooks you for endless torment, and certain to be stigmatised as stingy, or disobliging, or

extortionate, as the case may be, if you insist upon your rights, or do not yield to your tenant's wishes. So, say I, if you are wise, you will keep out of sight and reach altogether, and, unless your tenant happens beforehand to be an acquaintance, come not nigh him as you value your happiness and reputation.

On receipt of the above note my first impulse was to act as my father had been wont to act before me; but after deliberating I resolved to go and see this Captain Hawser, just to pay one visit. It seemed so hard that the gentleman should have been treated with incivility. Surely there was no occasion for acting in any way discourteously, whatever points there might be at issue. I should let him see, at any rate, such was not my practice. So off I started for a morning call on the captain, and certainly I found I had got a peculiar fellow to deal with, and one who fully bore out the character I had heard given of him. He was rough in his manner, and spoke fearfully loud; his talk was desperately nautical, scarce a remark escaping him that was free from some sea-phrase or other, while to most parts of the house he had given regular ship names. The cellar was the hold, the passages were all gangways, and every story above the dining-room floor was 'aloft' with him: I first caught sight of my gentleman at the parlour-window, from which he espied me, and, knowing who I was, I suppose—for I was calling by appointment—he opened the door to let me in himself.

'You've found us short of hands, Mr. —. I don't always open the door; but, except the cook, who's in the galley, we happened to clear out the whole of our old crew yesterday, and I don't expect our fresh one will

be all told before the end of the week.'

Presuming his remark had reference to changing his servants, I made some observation upon the inconvenience attending such a proceeding, after which he went straight into the matter immediately before us.

'You see, sir,' he began, 'this house wants a regular over-hauling all throughout. The walls, most of them, want rigging with fresh paper, and the woodwork must be repainted; and then the timbers had better be seen to, for I've a notion the rats are playing the deuce below the planking; I hear them hard at it o' nights.'

'Indeed?' I exclaimed, 'the rats! I am very sorry to hear that. I am not aware that any of our previous tenants have complained of there being rats about the premises. Are you sure they are in the house?'

'O ay; certain! And I'll tell you when I first found they were about the place. About six months ago an old mate, a bit of an invalid, took up his berth here for a few weeks; and one wet day he asked me what I thought of a bit of ratting. "Why," says I, "I've no rats aboard." "O, never mind that," he says. So he put me up to the dodge of sending for one of those ratcatcher fellows, who brought a score or so in a cage, and we had a glorious hunt below with the dogs, I can tell you; but some of them must have got adrift somehow, for ever since that day I've heard them scuttling away among the timbers.'

I confess I felt not a little indignant as I listened to my friend detailing with such perfect coolness so unwarrantable a proceeding.

'Allow me to say, Captain Hawser, I think you should have been more considerate than to in-

introduce vermin into a house like this. Of course it is you I have to thank for the nuisance you complain of, and—'

'Complain of! Not a bit of it! Don't mistake me; I'm not complaining. I don't mind the rats—not I, faith: been too many years at sea to care about such things—only, out of consideration for you, I thought I would just name the matter in case you might be afraid they were doing mischief. As far as I'm concerned, I shall be very glad to have a few left about the place to keep it lively of a night. I never would have put to sea any time, if I'd known it, in a ship that hadn't her complement of rats aboard. It's a bad sign when rats leave a vessel. Sure to go to the bottom before long if they do.'

'That may be all very well, sir; but seamen's superstitions do not apply to house property, happily. There's no danger of a house foundering or being wrecked as ships are; so that the rats—'

'Ay, ay; but a house may catch fire just as likely as a ship, and if these rats were all to clear out now they've once been in, I should fancy we were going to have a flare-up, and I'd have the pumps rigged immediately. By the bye, that just reminds me you've no pumps here that are of any use, and if I'm to hold on you must oblige me by putting up two or three.'

'No pumps!' exclaimed I, in astonishment. 'How do you mean no pumps? There used to be two, I am quite certain—one hard, the other soft, water. What has become of them? The rats have surely not destroyed them?'

'O, they're all right enough, they're in working gear; but those are not the sort of pumps I mean. What's the use of pumps, I wonder, down in the hold when

there's a fire aloft? What you want is pumps on deck, I should think, don't you?'

'I really do not understand you!' I replied, completely mystified; and, getting a little impatient, I added, 'I cannot see any correspondence between the fitting up of a house and the equipments of a vessel.'

'But there ought to be; and it would be a good job if builders took a hint or two from an old salt like me. I could put them up to a thing or two, I could. Now, you see, this house of yours is what we call a three-decker—you call them stories—well, you ought to have a pump or so on each deck, one or two pumps on every story, just as we have aboard ship; and then, in case of fire, you've only to pipe all hands to work the pumps, and I'll engage you'll get the fire under before any fire-engine could be brought to play upon the premises from outside.'

'I really do not think it would serve any purpose to introduce such a number of pumps into the house; the next tenant would probably not care about them, or perhaps deem them an eyesore. How strange they would look on the landings! You never see such contrivances in private dwellings, I assure you.'

'Very likely you don't; but there's no argument in that. I can remember the time when there was no such thing as a funnel seen on board a man-of-war, and we should have said how strange it looked to see a chimney rising up out of the deck; but there's plenty now that have got them, some two. You put me the pumps up, now, and say, if you like, it was an old tar's fancy. But stop a bit, though; there's something in here I want to point out to you by way of an improve-

ment. Just turn in here to my cabin a moment,' and so saying, he summoned from the profundity of his pocket a huge bunch of keys, and proceeded to unlock a small room at the back of the dining-room, observing, 'You're highly favoured, I assure you; no one ever sets foot in here beside myself.'

And O! the overpowering whiff that greeted me as I entered my tenant's sanctum—a compound atmosphere of stale grog-steam and tobacco, coupled with an element of stuffiness that nearly suffocated me as I encountered it.

'What are you snuffing at, Mr. —, eh? No rats in here—no rats in the captain's cabin, I'll warrant.'

'I was not thinking of rats; I merely fancied the room was rather close, and would be the better for having the window open a little. Don't you perceive yourself that the room wants some fresh air let in?'

'Can't say I do, though I'll be bound I'm as sharp-scented as you are. But I declare it's a good joke to hear a landsman like you talk about fresh air to one like me who has been afloat going on forty years. I wonder if it will ever be your luck to take in as much fresh air as I have? You should have been with me in my cruise round the Cape in '49, when we lay-to under bare poles the best part of three weeks, and a hurricane blowing all the while. You'd have had enough of it then—ay, enough to last you your lifetime. Fresh air, indeed! Ha, ha! Now I don't know what may be your notion of comfort, but this is mine,' he added, with a self-satisfied air.

And certainly, if it was my friend's ambition to reproduce one of his board-ship retreats, he had fully achieved his object.

Into this room—a small one, as I have said—he seemed to have imported all his cabin fixtures that were possible, in addition to an extensive assortment of nautical instruments, with the uses of which non-seafaring men like myself are profoundly ignorant. Amongst others, three chronometers, all going, lay upon the table, besides compasses and quadrants and sextants and barometers, telescopes to any number, and finally a huge speaking-trumpet, highly burnished, whose dented condition bespoke long service, and of itself sufficed to proclaim the calling of the owner. Besides these there were trophies and curiosities from distant parts: Indian bows and arrows, spears and tomahawks from Australia, gongs and crockery from China, shells and tusks of all shapes and sizes, the skins, the teeth, the bones of beasts, birds, and fishes—all of which combined to tell a tale of distant travel.

'We have, perhaps, different ideas of comfort,' I replied; 'but I can quite fancy your feeling very cosy in this snuggerly of yours.'

'Well, I'll tell you. Of a night it's snug enough; but it's too dark in the daytime by half. You see there's no look-out from what I call the stern-window here' (pointing over his shoulder); 'the back of that house yonder is a vast sight worse than any fog. I'd just as soon be moored up against a dock-wall every bit, I would.'

'I am afraid,' said I, 'that house is likely permanently to interfere with your view; but, you know, that is one of the unavoidable drawbacks to a town residence which it is vain to think of remedying.'

'O, I don't hold with you at all there. I've got a plan in my head for letting in more daylight

and getting a bit of a look-out into the bargain, and that is from the fore.'

'What do you mean?' I asked, in unfeigned wonderment of what was coming.

'Why, it's the simplest thing in the world. You've only to knock a hole in this bulkhead,' he proceeded, coolly tapping the partition-wall, 'and just put a good-sized window in it, and you'll get plenty of daylight, and something of a look-out, too, through the next room and out at the front window right ahead into the street.'

'You surely would not propose my breaking through this partition?' I exclaimed, in amazement.

'Yes, I would; why not? Give me a couple of able-bodied men, and I'll undertake to knock a way into the next room in less than an hour. For that matter, if I had a crowbar I'd make short work of the bricks and mortar. Where there's a will, you know—'

'That is very likely; but you see as owner of this house I am bound to consider my own interest as well as the fancies of my tenants, and I could not consent to damage my property in the way you propose. Probably you were only joking in making such a suggestion. Why, the next room would be completely spoiled.'

'What! Then you won't consent, won't you?'

'I am afraid I cannot.'

'Not if I pay the expense?'

'Not if you pay the expense.'

'Ha, I see how it is! I shall have to slip my cable and look out for other moorings. You're shaping your course just after your father—poor man! I never could get him to give way so much as a point or two once he had settled his bearings.'

My tenant, whom at first I found amusing, I began to feel a

bore; so, anxious to cut short the interview, I inquired,

'Is there anything else, Captain Hawser, you have to say to me?'

'Anything else! Bless you, you've not heard the half yet; but I may as well heave-to now, as it's as plain as daylight I shall never make an inch of way with you nohow.'

Thus we parted, my visit having accomplished nothing beyond establishing the same unpleasant feeling between the captain and myself that had subsisted between him and my father. I desired the agent, however, to set the paper-hangers and painters to do all my tenant desired in that way, and the result was he thought better of his decision, and remained in my house for upwards of another year; but at the end of that time death laid its hand upon him; and as his widow went to live with his friends in the country, I was left tenantless for a season.

I had been always given to understand that my house was one sure to be snapped up as soon as vacant; it was therefore with a feeling of unpleasant surprise that I found week after week passing away without a tenant turning up. I asked Mr. Grasper whether he could suggest anything to expedite its letting. 'Furnish it,' said he. 'Take my advice, and furnish it, and I'll undertake it will be let within a week. This is just the season when furnished houses are in request.'

'What will that cost?' I asked, ignorant as I was of the expense of such a proceeding.

'Why, that depends upon the style in which you go to work; but I should say if you spent from three to four hundred pounds upon furniture, that would do.'

I had misgivings about embarking in this outlay; still, rather than remain without my rent I

consented to follow my agent's advice. His prediction, sure enough, proved correct, for the house was quickly taken—I forget within how many days—and my mind was again at ease.

It had been a maxim with my father to refuse families with young children. I, however, broke through that rule, smarting as I was under the loss of rent, and, truth to tell, wanting the money to reimburse me for the outlay I had gone to. Fool that I was, I let in a family with some seven or eight children, and worst of all, an Irish family: a reckless proceeding on my part, for which I was doomed soon to pay the penalty. Who or what my tenant for the time being might be was of course no concern of mine, so long as he was respectable and paid his way; and when I was told he held some government clerkship—so Mr. Grasper understood—I felt that was some sort of a guarantee. Still, knowing as I did that the salaries of such appointments until near the top of the tree were not munificent, I admit having felt some surprise that a man, and, as I was told, a comparatively young man, in his position should embark in a house of the rent mine was. But as I have said, that was no business of mine. My principle was to be that of non-interference, as much as possible; and on one point I was quite resolved: never again to go near my tenants under any circumstances, but to let agent and tenant battle out matters as best they could. Furnished houses, I learned, were always paid for in advance, quarterly, and the first quarter's payment was forthcoming at once; the second, however, seemed somehow to hang fire, and, in spite of one or two reminders from Mr. Grasper, the third quarter had

commenced without a symptom of the money due. My agent asked me what was to be done, adding that he was afraid things looked ugly. 'I had better serve them with a notice to quit,' said he.

'What! a notice to quit already! Why, they seem to have only just come in!'

'Well, there's only one other course if you object to that, and that is to send the gentleman a lawyer's letter threatening him.'

'Threatening him with what?'

'Threatening him with legal proceedings.'

'And if that fails, what then?'

'Why, then, commence proceedings against him.'

'But that will all cost money.'

'Yes, no doubt. You had better let me take the other course first; and I'll tell you why. I'm afraid the parties are not taking quite that care of your property which I could desire.'

'Indeed! Do you refer to the house or the furniture?'

'Both, I'm afraid.'

That was quite sufficient to my mind. My property was being destroyed. I must break through my resolve, and be off and see to it myself. Yes, notwithstanding my recent determination to avoid my tenants, go I must. 'Hi! cab! Drive me to —. Look sharp.'

In due course I arrived at the door; and as I stood waiting for admittance, it was plain, from the din I heard going on inside, that my hall was, for the time being, serving the purpose of a playground; and it was probably owing to the row made by the young rioters within that two or three applications for admittance proved unavailing. I seized the opportunity of a lull to give another pull at the bell. This time I was heard. The door was opened by a maiden, whose dialect proclaimed her as a native of





the Emerald Isle ; the condition of her capless head suggesting interesting conjectures as to when a comb or brush might last have been in requisition. The sport going on in the hall did not, I thought, tell well for what I should find elsewhere ; and after an unconscionable detention, during which I heard commotion, and, as I thought, a man's voice above-stairs, I was at length shown up into the drawing-room.

My heart, I believe, stood still, so taken aback was I at the condition it presented. It was difficult to say to what purpose this room, with its furniture so nice and new about six months ago, was not being turned. There was a cradle in a corner, from which the small occupant had freshly been removed, culinary and other utensils revealing the fact that the room was being made available for all sorts of uses. An effort had been made—I heard it going on while I was waiting below—to make the room presentable for me ; but in the hurry articles had been left behind enough to show that some of the family regularly slept there. Two rosewood chairs, from which some linen placed to dry had been removed, were left roasting before a blazing fire. The handsome couch to match had been in the wars and lost a leg—a wine-bottle doing duty for the absent limb ; while the table—rosewood also, of course—had disappeared altogether, and a deal article with a filthy cloth upon it stood in its place. The lady—as, I suppose, I must designate her—gave me time for contemplation, during which my wrath was attaining a climax ; but at last she made her appearance, catching me in the act of removing the scorching chairs from the fire, and with a

brogue that there was no mistaking, broke forth with,

‘Is it Mr. —, the landlord ? Indeed, then, it's I that am glad to see ye ; but, faith, not expecting the pleasure of a visit from ye, I'm afraid ye'll find the place rayther untidy. But perhaps you're a married man, and won't mind it so much if you've a family of your own.’

Wrathful as I was, I confess to having been momentarily diverted by the speech and manner of this woman ; but not being quite in the mood to be amused by Hibernian peculiarities, I plunged forthwith into the purpose of my visit.

‘I have come myself to see whether all that I have heard as to the way my property is being treated is true ; and now I tell you at once that I give you notice.’

‘Is it notice to leave this house ye mean ?’

‘Yes, to leave this house ; at latest, by the end of this quarter. But probably I shall require you to vacate before.’

‘An' what would ye be giving us notice for ? Is this the way you English landlords treat their respectable tenants ? Well, I'm sure ! Irish landlords is bad enough ; but never speak to me of Irish landlords after this.’

I tried to keep my temper ; but I added,

‘Well, Mrs. —, I had heard something of the way my property was being treated ; but I confess I was not prepared for anything so shameful as I have found this morning. It seems to me you actually eat and drink and sleep and cook, and I know not what else, in this, the drawing-room. Where is the table ?’

‘O, shure, the table is just gone to be repaired ; ye'll see it there next time ye call.’

‘And look at that handsome

couch, the state it's in! A leg off, and propped up, I declare, with a bottle!

'Ay, indeed, it wants repairing, too; but the man could not carry the two of them. He'll, maybe, take it away to be repaired when he brings back the table.'

'Disgraceful!' I proceeded. 'One thing I am quite determined. You shall make good all the damage done, both to the house and to the furniture—and that quickly. I wish you good-morning.'

So I came away, leaving the lady from Erin making remarks I did not quite catch, though it seemed to me a strong word or two escaped her while indulging in her semi-soliloquy.

To set Mr. Grasper to work forthwith was my resolve.

'Well, Mr. Grasper, I have been to my house in —, and I am sorry to find what you said was but too correct. Why, the place is going to rack and ruin, furniture and all.'

'I was afraid so.'

'You were afraid so! But why, then, did you not look to it sooner? Now how are we to get these people out? Because it will never do to let them remain till the end of the quarter.'

'If you will leave that to me, sir, I will attend to it without giving you further trouble in the matter. Perhaps it will be almost best to offer them some money to leave.'

'Offer them money!' I exclaimed; 'offer them money! Why, I have just told the lady I should make them pay me for damage done to the furniture! Then there are the arrears of rent. I am not going to let them off, I assure you! Cannot you get it?'

'I am almost afraid there may be a difficulty; but I will try,

sir. But the fact is, it is always a difficult thing to get hold of money when there are no effects to realise it upon. That is the worst of a furnished house.'

'Then, if the man declines, or is unable to pay, I am to go without it! And you, in addition, actually suggest I should pay him instead!'

'Very hard, sir, very hard indeed. I do not, at the moment, see quite how to advise you. Let me consider over it.'

'What is meant, Mr. Grasper, by a warrant of distress? I have heard the term, and I think I should like you to issue one.'

The agent smiled at my simplicity.

'Why, sir,' he replied, 'a warrant of distress would enable you to seize the furniture; but, you see, as the furniture is yours already, it seems to me you would not gain much by the proceeding. Most likely there is little in the house but what belongs to you, and—'

'I saw a child's cradle, which certainly is not mine—the only thing probably in the house that is not; so that, were a warrant of distress issued, that is all I should secure. Scarcely worth while, certainly. But, seriously, can one do nothing in such a case? Can we not arrest the man?'

'Arrest him for what?'

'Why, for debt, of course!'

'O yes; you can have him arrested for arrears of rent, if you think it worth while.'

'That is the plan, then. How do we set about it?'

'Well, sir, I am afraid you won't find that plan pay; on the contrary, I'm much mistaken if you would not be pounds out of pocket by the step.'

'Pounds out of pocket! How?'

'For this reason. Say you have the man thrown into gaol.

Well, he may remain there for months before his case comes on for hearing. During all that time he is still your tenant; and at the end of it, if he is declared insolvent, he pays nothing.'

'Good gracious! Then abandon the idea of arresting him. Only get these people out; get them out, I say.'

I returned home that day, as may be supposed, heavy and displeased, late, and with little appetite for my dinner, which had been long waiting. As Mr. Grasper would, I felt assured, act promptly, and from his experience knew exactly the correct thing to do, I resolved to keep quiet, and not go near the man of business till the job was over.

But they were slippery folks, these Hibernians, and by their own act wonderfully simplified the work for Mr. Grasper; for while he was busy bringing the usual legal apparatus to bear upon the case, a policeman called at his office with the information that the family had decamped, and that the premises were at the moment in charge of one of the force. How the discovery was made I am not quite certain; but as far as I can remember, a window, which ought to have been closed, was one night left open; whereupon the watchman, receiving no answer to his ring at the bell, clambered in and found the place deserted.

Yet the flitting of this interesting family did not afford matter for unmixed satisfaction; for, not content with swindling me out of my rent, these birds of passage had made off with a good deal they took a fancy to or that could be turned into money. It was, of course, no neighbour's business, but trucks had been seen at the door at very suspicious hours, and goods under cover of tarpaulin

conveyed away, whither no one had cared to inquire, leaving about as amusing a caricature of a furnished house as could well be pictured. To trace these people was hopeless. The representation as to the man holding a government clerkship proved to be all a fabrication, so that one was even denied the satisfaction of getting the fellow turned out of his situation for his roguery.

An end, I resolved, to letting my house furnished. The place should be cleared of what these swindlers had kindly left behind, and might then remain vacant for years before I put in another stick of furniture. The dilapidated residue was sold off for a song at a neighbouring sale-room, and the proceeds being expended in cleansing, purifying, and rendering the place habitable, Mr. Grasper and I returned to the work of looking out for a fresh tenant.

'This House to Let; inquire of Mr. Grasper,' was now posted or pasted up once more on my property in the hope of catching some passer-by in quest of a residence, while the *Times* and other papers became weekly pensioners upon me for inserting an attractive intimation to the same effect.

It was ruinous work this, altogether. Not being a business man, I did not keep an account, and I should be afraid to say to how much the mere expense of advertising amounted, but I feel confident to the tune of many pounds. Then it would not do, of course, to leave the house empty; a caretaker had to be engaged at, I think, four shillings a week for living there and showing inquirers over it; so that, with one expense and another, an empty house is a costly thing. Worst of all, there seemed no prospect of letting the place. It had been vacated towards the

close of the London season, town was drained of gentry, and so I was doomed to go rentless certainly until it began to refill. But, alas, the influx of the world again seemed to bring me no better luck, and I felt like a despairing angler on a blank day, watching in vain for the dipping of his float, as from time to time, when walking in the neighbourhood, I would descry the inevitable notice, 'This House to Let.'

It happened, however, one afternoon as I was perpetrating my disconsolate saunter in the same direction, waxing perhaps a shade more resigned to my fate, that I perceived a well-appointed equipage standing nearly opposite to the door of my house, and evidently waiting for the party that had alighted. 'Visitors to the folks next door,' said I to myself, the possibility of the carriage having brought any one to view my property never entering my head. On nearing the spot, however, to my amazement, the door of my house opened, and a lady and gentleman in very good style emerged, pausing for a parting word with the woman in charge before taking their departure. I noticed, as I slackened my pace, the lady slip some *douceur* into the woman's hand, and was just in time to hear her, as she did so, say, 'We are very much obliged to you for being so candid; we should most likely have taken this house, but—' I lost the remainder, but I stared after the carriage as it drove away so as, if possible, to know the party again. But here was a discovery! No wonder the house did not let. It was plain the wretched caretaker was vilifying the premises to all inquirers, and doing what in her lay to prevent the place letting.

My first impulse was to dash back and turn the creature out my-

self instantler, but upon reflection I resolved to go to work more warily, so as to establish a clearer case against her. I accordingly resolved to call next day as if to view the premises, and ascertain what amount of injury she was doing me; and then, having drawn her out as much as possible, to rid the house of her before the evening. In order the more completely to allay suspicion, I took a married sister of mine with me to act the part of a wife, so that we might appear as a married couple in quest of a dwelling.

'We should like to look over this house, if you please,' said I, as the woman opened the door to us about eleven o'clock next day. It must have been my fancy, but I imagined the woman looked very hard at me before she replied; and my sister, a bad hand at acting a part, nearly spoiled the whole plot at the outset by reddening deeply and beginning to titter. The woman accompanied us from room to room, causing us mingled feelings of indignation and amusement with her volunteered libels on the premises as she fell into the snare we had laid for her. To every part of the house her inventive mind had devised some objection more or less serious, determined, if possible, to destroy any opinion of a favourable nature which the place might make upon us.

'What a nice kitchen this is!' observed my pretended wife, 'is it not?'

'You wouldn't say so, ma'am, if you had to spend your time in it,' interposed the woman.

'Indeed! Why not?' I asked.

'Why, the place bain't fit to bide in, nor yet to cook in; it do get that there damp as I knows I shall catch my death o' rheumatiz afore I've a done; and then the smells be so bad—you should

come in some night when the doors be shut—I do think as there must be a drain or summat a-runnin' underneath, for the smells do rise terrible; pertickler when it do rain it do rise that there all over the house right up-stairs into the drawin'-room, and I've a-knowed it right up in the attics sometimes.'

'You astonish me!' said I; 'and yet I don't see any signs of damp. I wonder how that is?'

'No, you don't, cos I be bound to mind as you don't see none signs on't; that's by Mr. Grasper's orders, as I was to keep good fires allus a-goin', so as to allus look as if 'twas quite dry. But 'tain't for me to be a-usin' deceptions the likes o' that, 'tain't my natur'; so I do feel bound to tell the gentlefolk all as I knows again the place as well as for it.'

'Are you alone here?' I asked.

'There ain't no one a-livin' here besides me, without 'tis my husband, as goes to work of a mornin' and comes home again at night. Lor! I wouldn't bide here alone nights not whatever; there be that many rats about as 'tain't safe a'most for no one to bide here by theirselves after dark.'

I confess this allusion to the rats rather troubled me; still, I felt sure the woman was exaggerating, so I remarked in her hearing to my sister,

'I think, my dear, if we decide on taking this house, it will be well to mention these two matters to the landlord—the damp and the rats; and I should also like him to put up two cupboard, one in each of these recesses.'

'If you please, sir, you'll be sayin' nothin' to Mr. Grasper as'll be gettin' me into trouble, cos he do suppose as I does all I can to help let the house; but I can't bring myself to be deceivin' no one, I can't; and besides, 'tain't no

manner of use you speakin' to the landlord, since I've heard say as he don't care a bit about goin' from his word, declarin' he never didn't promise none such things.'

'I am sorry to hear such an account of the landlord; my best plan will, I see, be to transact business with Mr. Grasper, the agent.'

'Well, sir, he bain't no better. They be just a pair on 'em, landlord and agent, I says; and it's my advice the less you has to do with either ov 'em the better. You'd say the same if you'd a-know'd them so long as I have; that's how 'tis no one don't stop here long. If so be as you was to take the house, he'd be to let again afore the year was out.'

'Well, I never should have suspected there were such objections to the place as you state—so nicely done up, too, as it seems, so clean and fresh.'

'So it do. 'Tain't long ago as he was painted, and that I do know, cos I was took there bad from the smell on't as I be but just a-recoverin'; but do you know, sir, as there be things as no white-wash won't kill, and no paint won't drive away, and them's they as be a-swarmin' in the walls and in the wood, and bides out o' sight all day and comes out nights—you knows what I do mean.'

'No, I do not, indeed. You surely do not mean to say that there are vermin of that sort in the house?'

'I mean to say as the walls be pretty nigh alive, as you'd find the same the first night as you did sleep here. I've heard tell as the last tenant kept fowls here in the kitchen, which may be the reason as there be so many fleas about; but there be worse things than fleas here.'

The evident allusion to Norfolk Howards made my sister shudder,

taking in for the moment as gospel the fabrication of this miserable woman, and breaking out with, 'O, how dreadful!' a result which seemed to please the woman greatly. She gave a smile of triumphant satisfaction. But we were both growing weary of the farce, and having now accomplished the object of our visit, we began to long for the arrival of Mr. Grasper, whom, by appointment, I was to meet there at a stated hour. The time was up, and I was on the point of cutting short our friend's tissue of falsehoods by announcing who I was, when, to our relief, the door opened with a latchkey, which was succeeded by footsteps in the hall.

'Hush!' said the woman, 'that's Mr. Grasper. You'll mind and not be tellin' him nothin'.'

Now the agent had not been let into the secret of the little plot I had intended acting, so that my unmasking was almost sure to follow upon the first remark he made to me.

'Good-day, Mr. —,' said he. 'Do you know, I really think I have found you a tenant for this house. The parties are coming to view it this afternoon.'

'Well, I am sure I am glad to hear it,' and, unable to suppress my indignation, I added, 'I have reason to suspect we should have let it over and over again but for this woman's tongue.'

The farce was now at an end; but the expression on the woman's face of malignant astonishment is not to be described. Too amazed for a moment to utter a syllable, she stood transfixed, her wrath not at first finding vent as she perceived how thoroughly we had circumvented her. I looked at her, and she at me, our sentiments towards each other being probably reciprocated; for if she regarded me as an odious cunning wretch,

I am sure I considered her a mendacious abomination.

'I think, Mr. Grasper, you and I had better be here to show the premises when the party comes to see the house, for it is plain to me we may just as well take the notices down at once if this person is left in charge.'

'Indeed! Have you then reason to think she is not acting quite in our interest?'

'In our interest!' I exclaimed. But I was allowed to get no further, for by this time the infuriated female, who had sufficiently recovered herself to find her tongue, burst out at me,

'I am sure 'tain't for the likes o' you to be takin' a poor body's character like that, no, that it ain't! To think o' comin' here a-deceivin' a poor ooman like me, all of a pretence as you was a-takin' this 'ere 'ouse! I never done such deceits as that, I didn't; for if ever I—'

'Come,' said I impatiently, 'that is quite enough; don't make matters worse by insolence. You have allowed that tongue of yours too much license already. However, we have now discovered you, and I shall take good care your falsehoods do me no more injury. Mr. Grasper, this person must be removed from the premises immediately.'

'Well, sir, do you know, I have sometimes suspected we were not being treated quite fair. There have been such a number of parties to view the house, and though they all decline to say anything against it exactly, still they won't take it. I've often said to myself it isn't the rent, nor 'tisn't the situation, and no one can say but what it's in first-rate repair; therefore what is it? I've felt, sir, there was a mystery about it. What is it?' (turning to the woman) 'you have been saying to the prejudice of this house?'

'I ain't said nothin' as ain't true. I never deceives no one, and you ain't a-goin' to make me neither. The kitchen floor be damp, I don't care, and the place do smell times, and no one sha'n't stop me sayin' as it do; and I wouldn't a-bided on in this 'ere dissolute place wotever. That there paint and whitewash, it don't deceive me, for I knows all about it, though it be laid on so thick; and I can 'ave a good character for a 'onest ooman, and trustworthy too, without axin' either of you, I can. I do like dealin' with gentlemen, I does;' and away she went down the kitchen-stairs, while Mr. Grasper called after her to pack up her bundle and clear out of the place as speedily as possible.

In spite of the odium I had incurred, and the species of deception I had practised, my conscience did not smite me, and I felt I had done a good day's work, having made a discovery quite worth the while. Some new people came, were pleased with the house, took it, and I was able to look forward once more to receiving the rent which nothing but a woman's libellous tongue had deprived me of so long.

Well-circumstanced folk were these new-comers, and identified, I found, with a good West End set. They kept their carriage, and I think three horses; and so well pleased were they with their quarters that they expressed to Mr. Grasper a wish to take the place on lease rather than remain on as yearly tenants, at the conclusion of the first twelvemonth; a proposal which we deemed so desirable that I authorised the agent to reduce the rent by ten pounds annually, by way of an inducement to do so. Alas, though, how precarious is the comfort derivable from the posses-

sion of house property! How slender, at the best, one's hold of the satisfaction that it brings us! Trouble was again at hand, and a blow about to fall upon me heavier than any I had yet felt, inasmuch as the injury it was destined to inflict proved graver, and open to no remedy. This time it was a horrid railway that was fated to do me the damage. For some time past a certain railway scheme, unnoticed by me, and, as he affirmed, by Mr. Grasper also, had already twice passed the Commons, though thrown out by the Upper House. It was hoped by some that the project had been abandoned, and that it need cause us no anxiety. Certain wealthy influential folk were owners of extensive tenements thereabouts, all of which would, like my little patrimony, suffer serious depreciation were the Bill at any time to pass. So, taking into consideration the strenuous opposition it was always sure to meet with, it was thought it would receive the inevitable 'No' when submitted to the Peers. But Fate decreed it otherwise.

How the selfish projectors carried their point I now forget, and I am sure I do not care; all I know is they gained their end and laughed at my objections, along with those of others. The line, it was said, was sure to be a paying one, and money in abundance for it was speedily forthcoming. So, in haste to reap their gains, they set to work at once, and all too soon up sprang a bank, on which a tramway with its trains of tilting wagons was seen in operation, to the discomfiture of both house-owners and tenants interested in keeping matters *in statu quo*. With amazing rapidity the line itself was in due course thrown open for traffic, and

trains crammed with living freights or goods commenced running to and fro within a stone's throw of my front door. But months before this my eligible tenants had flitted, preferring an abode out of reach of the rattle, and the rumbling, and the everlasting whistle, and the sickly-smelling smoke, and the puffing of a hateful railway.

Others, unfortunately for me, seem to share their sentiments; for before that railway opened the premises became vacant, and no one that I hear of ever comes to inquire the rent. Property to the tune of thousands in the neighbourhood has been irretrievably impaired in value through the audacious presumption of this crew of grasping speculators. House after house, I notice, as their leases expire, become vacated; some are opening shop-windows out; one is already a temperance hotel; another close to mine is an hotel where temperance is not thought much of; and as to the rest, they are desolate without inhabitants. I am told some of the proprietors have recovered heavy compensation from the company—so heavy that, in place of being losers, they have gained vastly by the undertaking. I do not know how it is, to me they decline awarding anything

in compensation. Some recommend my bringing an action against the company, suing them for the loss I have sustained; others affirm my case to be a doubtful one, and Mr. Grasper, who has had, he says, experience in like cases, declares I should not have a leg to stand upon, and that I should be certain to be *cast* in court, whatever that means, and in for costs into the bargain. I suppose I must bear it, hard as it is. One or two offers to buy my property have been made me—insulting offers I consider them, one fellow coolly telling me he would give me the full value of the bricks and stones. However, I shall not sell—not I. I have reduced the rent, and re-reduced it; but it seems all no go. I pass the place sometimes. It begins, to my mind, to look haunted. I am single, so the house is too big for me, otherwise I declare I would go and live there myself. The very notices are acquiring a dingy look. Reader, for all I know, you may have passed the place and read them. At any rate, in future think upon my case of hardship, and bestow on me a thought of pity as you read those familiar words, hitherto, perhaps, not suggestive to your mind of sympathy, 'This House to Let.'

H. DE QUINTON.

RECOLLECTIONS OF SUMMER DAYS.

WHEN the sky above is gray and the air is raw ; when the foliage of the trees glistens with rain-drops instead of with sunshine, as is so often the case during our modern English summers, we may derive the same sort of satisfaction in looking back to days of genuine summer weather as the penniless *gourmet* finds in the contemplation of an appetising bill-of-fare. It is my lot frequently to be obliged to do this, and from a collection of old diaries I cull the following recollections.

Perhaps the very hottest summer day I ever experienced was when I was outward bound to China in the good P. and O. steamer *Khedive*. We had already gone through a bit of an ordeal, stuffed up in railway carriages between Alexandria and Suez, but it was nothing to what we had before us in the Red Sea. We had a full complement of passengers—rather an unusual event during the hot months—and although the *Khedive* was a fine roomy ship, as every man, woman, and child was on deck, there was but little space to move about, even if we had the energy and inclination so to do. So we sat, stood, or lay about in all directions, utterly unable to kill time on account of the intolerable heat, and only devoutly wishing that we could be wafted direct on the wings of some swift bird to Aden. Even for the eye there was no relief. The sun blazed down upon the dazzling white of the awning, and was reflected upon the almost equally dazzling white of the deck ; the sea flickered and danced as if it were melting metal ; and on the

shaggy sides of the African mountains there was not a shadow or a particle of green whereon the eye could rest. Our very clothes—and they were of the scantiest quantity and lightest material compatible with decency—irritated us. It was too hot to talk, much less to laugh ; too hot to smoke ; many degrees too hot for any such violent exercise as ‘buckets’ or ‘bull board ;’ the punkabs in the saloon only wafted hot air, and the penalty of drinking or sitting in the bath was to feel doubly hot afterwards. Even the hardened old Anglo-Indians on board said that it was a ‘melter,’ and the agonies of the ladies and children were painful to behold. Every few minutes a couple of Lascars would be carried up from the stokehole in a fainting condition, to be revived with buckets of water, and to be sent back again to their Inferno ; and, but for this temporary movement, our ship might have been that of the Ancient Mariner for aught of life or animation that there was on board. Not even our movement through the air—and we were steaming twelve knots—produced the smallest perceptible breeze ; the windsails flapped like damp linen, the pennons at the masthead hung limp and motionless, and the very caulking of the deck-seams adhered to our boots.

We hailed the approach of night with feelings of joy, but night brought us no relief except to the eyes ; and if midday heat is intolerable, night heat is yet more so. We had no appetites for dinner, and the sight and smell of the

dishes acted upon us much in the same way as they act upon weak-stomached folk when there is a high sea running. There was nothing to be done but to grin and bear it, so we said; but hard as it was to bear, it was harder still to grin. On the third day the doctor was very busy amongst the ladies and children. The only period of relief during this incessant cooking process was at early morning, when the decks were being swabbed, and we could get the hose played on us. This was Elysium whilst it lasted; but the result was a profuse perspiration which clung to us for the remainder of the day. No footsore tramp ever hailed the appearance of village inn with greater feelings of delight and thankfulness than did we on board the Khedive the coal-heaps of Aden. To us this God-forsaken spot seemed a veritable Promised Land, and in our ecstasy we actually persuaded ourselves that it was picturesque. At Aden we left three ladies, who had been rendered dangerously ill by the ordeal through which they had passed. It has been my fate to go through the Red Sea more than once since this memorable voyage, but never have I experienced such discomfort and misery.

This was an unpleasant summer-day experience; but by far the greater number of those which occur to my memory are delightful in the extreme.

But we had a very hot time of it one summer at Aldershot. The 138th regiment of Middlesex Volunteers was a corps which did as much hard work in the year as any other body of her Majesty's reserve forces. We always turned up in good strength at the great events of the year, such as the Easter Review, the brigade drills in Hyde Park, and the Whitsuntide outing; and besides, we al-

ways had at least two other private expeditions of our own. One year it was a camp at Whitmoor Common, near Guildford; another year it was a flying march into Hertfordshire; but the memorable year, so far as I am concerned, was our week at Aldershot. If the sun strikes hotter upon any single tract of land than upon another in England, that spot must surely be Aldershot. The sandy soil seems to woo the perpendicular rays; and as there is little or no shade in that portion of the Lines set apart for the use of the Volunteers, constant exposure without relief is the result. However, we were very jolly under the circumstances, and had no leisure to think of the heat, or the weather, or of anything else beyond our duties, which commenced at five in the morning, and continued without much intermission until sundown. A rapid glance at one day's work will convince the reader that although we were Volunteers our Aldershot camp was anything but a picnic. At five A.M. the reveillé—called 'revalley'—sounded, and there was a general rush for the washing-range. Tents were then brailed up at the sides, and the doors opened to their fullest extent; beds—that is to say, the regulation waterproof sheet and our rugs—made, and each man's superfluous equipment, such as great-coat, mess-tins, and helmet, packed neatly on the top. This was followed by either a general drill on the hills, in which the whole battalion took part, or by company-drills on the private parades. At eight o'clock came breakfast—bread, butter, and coffee, which we might supplement by delicacies from the canteen. After breakfast the commanding officer, accompanied by the officer of the day, generally made an inspection of the camp, and great was the

competition amongst the occupants of the tents to produce a favourable impression in his august eyes. The inspection over, the real business of the day commenced, and upon the special summer's day which I call to mind most vividly, we were supplied with a day's rations, and instructed to be in heavy marching order—that is, helmet, great-coat rolled over the left shoulder, valise, mess-tin, haversack and water-bottle, twenty rounds of blank ammunition in our pouches, besides rifle and bayonet—no light weight to carry for six or seven hours, with the sun streaming down from a cloudless sky. Then we were marched off to take part in a grand field-day with the Regulars, under the immediate eye of a Royal Highness. From nine o'clock until midday, I believe, we performed every evolution in the *Red Book*, and a great many others not to be found in that standard work, and must have marched an incredible number of miles without leaving the side of one hill. At twelve o'clock a truce was sounded, and we sat down to a well-earned repast and a still more welcome pipe. After dinner I imagine the Regulars must have done all the business, for we were standing easy most of the time, or lying down, presumably under cover, but most palpably exposed, if not to hostile fire, at least to sunstroke. Then we were marched back to camp, a distance of about six miles, dust-stained from head to foot, burnt almost raw by the sun, and terribly thirsty. The very first thing a great many of our fellows did was to rush down to the canal and bathe. Those that did so broke out in eruptions soon after, and the surgeon informed us that such was always the case unless men wiped the Aldershot dust off their faces previous to placing them in water. Our labours ended, tea

was the universal rule, after which the night-guard went on duty, the picket was selected, and we were at leisure to play cricket with tent-pegs, or tug-of-war, or do anything we listed. This night we were allowed to sleep unmolested, in consideration of our exertions during the day; but upon another occasion, at the deadeast hour of the night, the bugle sounded, we were turned up, ordered to strike the camp, pack tents, baggage, and all impedimenta in the wagons, unpack them, pitch the camp again, and return to such sleep as we could get before five o'clock. Yet we are told that we play at soldiers!

I have a great many very pleasant recollections in connection with cricket; but one match in particular stands out prominently, on account of its intimate connection with the word 'heat.' We were on a cricket tour in Kent, and had got to the middle of the trip without meeting with a reverse. So, all cockaboo and confident, we started upon our match at Gore Court, near Sittingbourne. Whether we were literally intoxicated with success, or whether we were unable to shake off the effects of the liberal treatment of our Faversham host on the night before, I know not; but I do recollect very distinctly that, having won the toss, we went to the wickets at eleven o'clock, and in three-quarters of an hour were all out for a total too despicable to be mentioned. It will scarcely be credited, but, so far from this disaster having had the effect of knocking the conceit and confidence out of us, we were talking about taking all our opponents' wickets by lunch-time, and 'having a jolly afternoon's lounge after.' But we didn't. Sittingbourne had heard our fame, and we found two or three of the county professional

talent arrayed against us. Nothing daunted, we went out exuberant and frolicsome as school-boys, playing leap-frog with one another, and warming each other's hands with the ball; as if it was not warm enough already, with the sun beating down, and not a breath of air able to get through the trees which surrounded the ground! The first men came in, two of the Hop County players. I am in doubt whether the heat was worse for them or for us. Perhaps we had one advantage in the fact that we were not continually on the move as they were. Our bowlers did their 'level' best; but our field certainly did far below their 'level' worst. It didn't matter whether a ball broke, or shot, or hopped up: the men of Kent were ready for it. To us, it didn't matter whether a ball came in a caressing gentlemanly manner, or whether it came as if shot from a catapult: we let it go. Every man in the field tried to bowl; we might just as well have tried the ground-roller. And, as if to spite us specially, the few clouds which had been hovering about in early morning passed away, and the sun had undivided power at Sittingbourne. When the bell for lunch rang, the telegraph-board showed eighty runs for no wickets. The 'brickies,' who are great enthusiasts for all forms of sport, and who make a point of turning up at the Gore Court ground in full strength at every foreign match, saluted us variously as we walked in to the pavilion: 'Pretty 'ot out there, mate?' 'I say, Bill, that bloke's mother won't know him if he goes on gettin' red;' 'Come and show yer 'ow to field for 'arf a pint!' 'Gits the butter pretty cheap where they comes from'—this last in playful allusion to the balls we missed—and so on. Luncheon and the sequel pipe somewhat

soothed us; but I don't think we left the pavilion with the alacrity we had displayed at the commencement of the innings. But the laws of cricket are inexorable, and we turned out amidst the ironical cheers of the multitude. If luncheon soothed us, it certainly gave the batsmen additional vigour; for they did not play, but hit the ball all over the place. At length one of them was given out, leg before wicket, and to this day I believe that their umpire gave the decision out of charity for us; but the verdict was very unfavourably received by the 'brickies,' who hooted and whistled until the telegraph showed one hundred and twenty runs for one wicket, and the next men came in. It was whispered amongst us, 'We've got their swell out, let's play up.' And play up we did; but Fortune did not favour the brave, and, although we did stop the balls better than we had done, the new-comer proved quite as tough a nut to crack as his predecessor. Our 'field' began to have a motley appearance. Some of us assumed quite a brigandish air by turning down the brims of our 'flap hats;' one or two wore cabbages on their heads, whilst the variety of pocket-handkerchiefs displayed was picturesque in the extreme. To cut a long story short, at half-past six, when the stumps were charitably drawn, out of deference to the not entirely veracious statement on the part of our captain that we had a train to catch, the Sittingbourne score stood at over three hundred for the loss of five wickets—in fact for only four wickets, as one of the men who had gone in first retired, overcome by heat and exertion. It is all very well to talk about the merit of pluck in playing an up-hill cricket-match; but when it reduces itself to running about in the sun for five or

six hours, it is simply making a toil of a pleasure, and a dangerous toil too.

I think, after all, that rowing men get more genuine pleasure out of the few real summer days vouchsafed to us by our variable climate than do most men. There is no independence in cricket: one is always 'in action' and 'under orders'; and, even when the duties of fielding are over, the listless hours spent during the innings of one's own side appear a great waste of time. But the boating man—that is, the man who rows for pleasure, not the man in training for a race—is an independent being in every sense of the word. He can dress as he likes; he can do as much or as little as he feels inclined; he is bound by no time and to no place; he has constant change of scene, and, for the time being, his boat is his castle. So I look back with intense pleasure to summer days passed on our glorious old river.

We should invariably have camped out in order to complete the dream of independence; but the weather was never to be depended upon, and generally we were obliged to patronise the riverside inns. Some of these are getting spoilt by the enormous spread in the popularity of boating; but, for the most part, they still retain their pleasant, homely features, and, what is almost as great a recommendation, their moderate charges—this applies to the river above Maidenhead; of these matters below that point I say nothing. How delicious it was to wake in the morning with the fresh sweet scent of climbing flowers coming in at the open window; to jump into flannels and go for a plunge in the crystal stream! And what breakfasts we used to eat! I never see eggs and bacon without recalling riverside inns; and as for the much-

vaunted London steak, it is a delusion and a snare when put side by side with those generally to be obtained on the river. There is a genuineness about everything which is especially charming to the man hardened to the artificiality and adulteration of town living. You can see your eggs lying where they were laid, you can see your milk taken from the cow, your butter churned, your bread baked, and your vegetables pulled from the ground; and, after the breakfast, the long steady pull until the sun gains unpleasant strength, varied by occasional easies in dark copes formed by overhanging boughs, or wanderings through the long meadow-grass. The midday 'lie off' at a chosen spot; the pipe smoked and the light literature digested on one's back, with a canopy of fluttering leaves overhead. In the calm and beauty of evening, when the trees throw black shadows on the water, only broken by such glints of moon-rays that can penetrate through the thick foliage, it is exceedingly pleasant to row along listlessly—and, be it added, in due fairness to both sides of the picture, exceedingly unpleasant to arrive at the appointed inn and find no bed to be had for love or money, with the next inn half a dozen miles on. Then, if the inn is not full, the glorious supper, the pipe with the yokels in the parlour, and the well-earned bed! These and a hundred other pleasant memories flit through my mind when I look at my weather-beaten 'Taunt,' or my eye rests upon the tattered old flag which has waved in the bows of a certain four-oar on French, German, and Dutch waters, as well as on Thames, Severn, Wye, and Avon.

Of a very different character was a certain river trip I once made from Shanghai in China in

a house-boat. To the uninitiated it may be said that a Shanghai house-boat is very much more of a home than are the craft called by the same name which are met with occasionally upon the Thames; and the 'bosses' of the great banks and mercantile houses vie with each other in the lavish decoration and luxurious comfort of their house-boats. Many of them are, in fact, little floating drawing-rooms, ablaze with mirrors and gilding, and very much better adapted for 'loafing' purposes and entertainments than for shooting expeditions and other rough work. Ours was comfortable and complete enough; but it was a practical, and not an ornamental, house-boat. It was late summer when we started; for although a house-boat is generally tolerable during the hot season, when nothing else is, we were not much given to lounging and the reception of company. All told, we were six on board—including the 'lowdah,' or captain, the cook, and two coolies, to tow or work the boat. Scenery there is none near Shanghai; and, at the first starting, amidst the crowd of boats, junks, and sampans which block up the creek below bridge, the only sense titillated to any extraordinary degree was that of smell. It was very slow work, but we kept in the boat, and passed the time agreeably, if not profitably, in eating, drinking, smoking, and listening to the old lowdah's tales of his pirate life. The cook did his duty manfully, and varied our meals with the talent peculiar to Frenchmen and Chinamen. Until we passed Sicawei, which may be termed the boundary of the foreign dominion, the coolies oared the boat in their peculiar fashion, the lowdah steering—with his feet when his hands were busy with his 'chow' or his pipe. But when

we got out into the open country, the tow-rope was fastened and the coolies got out on to the bank. It was a curious voyage. Only one thing annoyed us, and, as it was inevitable, it had to be borne—the ceaseless attention paid to us by the native dogs. Chinese dogs—in fact, all Chinese animals—possess an extraordinary faculty of scenting out a foreigner, and the former invariably announce their discovery by howlings and barkings, which only cease with the complete disappearance of the obnoxious intruder. Sometimes in the country these dogs—which, like those of Constantinople, are the public scavengers, and are protected from harm by public edict as well as by popular prejudice—are positively dangerous; for although singly they are arrant cowards, and run off at the mere action of picking up a stone, in groups they are apt to be aggressive, especially if the foreigner be alone. We could always tell when we were approaching a village, when the high banks hid it from view, by the excitement amongst the dogs; and when we anchored for the night—always in mid-stream—their incessant barking banished all notions of sleep. Another annoyance were the mosquitoes; but at night the curtains kept them out. Everywhere we could see traces of the horrible work of pillage and devastation carried on during the Taiping rebellion; and, strange to say, in spite of the more generous ideas of civilisation which are beginning to assert themselves in China, as it is nobody's business to remedy the appearance of matters, the bare and desolate character of the country still remains. We must have passed during our week's trip at least twenty villages utterly wrecked and deserted, not to speak of magnificent porcelain bridges

ruined, pagodas tottering to their fall, roofless temples, and even desecrated graveyards. The absence of human life in the country was very striking, although in the towns and villages the people literally swarmed. We met but very little traffic. Once or twice we had to sheer into the bank to allow an imperial despatch-boat to dash by; and here and there, in the neighbourhood of the towns, we met pleasure-parties in barges, who made day hideous with the twanging of musical instruments, the beating of tom-toms, and the firing of crackers.

Every evening we anchored in mid-stream and jumped overboard for a swim; and upon one occasion, when the spot chosen was not far off from a town rejoicing in the euphonious name of Sin Ka Kok, as we were espied jumping overboard and striking out, the whole population swarmed out to witness the sight, the bridge was a mass of human heads, and the banks were lined with a crowd of both sexes. Not far from here are the only hills anywhere near Shanghai, and being hills, they are a favourite pilgrimage of foreigners weary of the monotonous grave-studded flatness of the country round the European settlement. They are but mounds; but there are actually some picturesque copses at their base, which are greatly resorted to by picnic-parties. We ascended the hills as in duty bound, and then turned the prow of our boat homewards—a proceeding which seemed to please our coolies mightily, for they took us back in half the time they occupied in bringing us.

Very pleasant are my memories of a sketching trip taken on foot some years back in Normandy. Pleasant probably from much the same reason as are memories of boating—the absolute independ-

ence. Our original intention had been to walk along the entire course of the Seine from Paris to Havre; but as our time was limited, we made Rouen our starting-point and St. Malo our termination. It is now more than ten years ago since this summer trip was made, yet every association is as fresh in my mind as if it were yesterday. The beautiful winding road from Rouen to Caudebec, through miles of orchards dotted with pleasant clean cottages, which, whilst they recalled Kent and Sussex, reminded us that the blood on both sides of the Channel is much the same still, notwithstanding the centuries which have elapsed since it was parted. Midday halts in spacious kitchens, where spotlessly-capped dames plied distaff and spindle in the good old fashion, and bright-eyed lasses churned butter in the primitive way of their forefathers. That hot bit of road to Jumièges, with which I remember we were disappointed, not so much, perhaps, on account of the baldness of the ruin as at the swarms of native artists who had come down by boat, and who drove every atom of romance away from the spot with their choruses and laughter. Caudebec—quaint, quiet, filthy, tannery-smelling Caudebec—with its glorious old church, and its timbered houses hidden away in all sorts of odd nooks and corners; Lillebonne, with its Roman amphitheatre; Havre and Caen. Three long summer days did we spend at Caen, filling our sketch-books and revelling in the old-world relics of the place; and it was only the beckon of the inexorable tyrant Time that dragged us away. From here we had very long hot walking on a perfectly straight bit of road to Bayeux, and thence another hot stretch to Saint Lo; from Saint Lo to Coutances, where, besides

the magnificent cathedral, the towers of which may be seen from Jersey, was a typical old French posting-house; from Coutances to Granville—empty, sad, and depressing as such places generally are when the season is over; then to Avranches, where we found ourselves in the midst of an English colony; and so on to Pontorson and Mont Saint Michel. On the passage to the latter we were as nearly as possible overtaken by the tide—a caution to those who disregard the warnings of inn-keepers and trust blindly to their own luck; and at Saint Malo ended one of the most delightful trips that I can associate with summer days. Normandy cider at first we could not stomach; but when we found the *bière du pays* worse, and the *eau de vie* worst of all, we made an effort, and succeeded so far that at length we drank nothing else. This little expedition was enjoyable because we took things easily, and did not make it an object to cram as many miles as possible into a given time, or to race through as many cathedrals, churches, and ‘lions’ as we could in the smallest number of hours.

When we felt inclined, we would ‘lie off’ for a day, and make up for lost time by travelling by rail or diligence on the next. Which of the two evils was the worse we never could decide; for the trains went at a snail’s pace, and, being few and far between, were invariably packed to suffocation with country folk and soldiers; whilst the diligences went fast enough—but the dust and the noise and the smell! Never in all my experience did I make such intimate personal acquaintance with the nocturnal genera of animal creation as upon this Normandy trip. But it should be noted that our appearance did not warrant our patronage of the tip-top hotels, although, notwithstanding their *tables d’hôte* and high-sounding titles, I very much doubt if in the respect alluded to we should have been much better off.

I can recall many other happy summer days; but, much as I could say about them, space warns me that I must bring this paper to a close with the well-worn quotation from old Herrick:

‘Gather the roses whilst ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying.’

FRANK ABELL.

THE SUMMER WIND.

SOFTLY the summer wind woos the rose.
Like a fickle lover,
He kisses her petals; then off he goes
The fair fields over.

Yet, since he hath kissed her, for aye the rose
Her heart uncloses;
And he breathes thereafter, wherever he goes,
The perfume of roses.

W. L.

OUR WEDDING TRIP.

WHEN a person marries an only child, and that only child a daughter, he often meets in full committee of the family parliament before finally passing the Bill. That is how I am able to tell you so much about the present instance. But it was not I who was the only child; for seven stout brothers and four pretty sisters are mine. The daughter in question was my darling Emily, who had allowed me to see that, amongst her many suitors, my chance was far and away the best. With her parents she had been more frank, giving them to understand plainly that the only man she would ever marry was—your humble servant. In short, she had already succeeded in pushing the said Bill through its first and second readings. The Opposition was weak, or rather null. Who could oppose an only daughter's wishes, when not flagrantly and absolutely unreasonable? As soon oppose the force of gravity and forbid the apple to fall from the tree.

Mamma only desired her Emily's happiness; and Emily had whispered in her ear that she could never, never be happy without me. Papa, on being communicated with, had said that certainly he had never dreamt of Mr. John Brownlow as a son-in-law. Not that serious objection could be made to Mr. Brownlow. If he had but little to expect from his parents, that was a matter of minor importance; other points were in his favour. He had mastered the routine of their house's business, and had been intrusted with con-

fidential missions to Paris. He had thus acquired the confidence of their head, who was an excellent judge of character; the other partners, too, thought well of him; he might get on and rise to—to an exceedingly good position; who could tell? And then Mr. Childers gave half a sigh over vaguely-formed visions of a title for his daughter, of aristocratic connections to be formed, and finally, at the sight of Emily's pleading face, consented. This was how I came to be promoted by the ladies from Mr. John Brownlow to simple 'John,' and to familiar and friendly 'Brownlow' by my superior and patron.

At one of these select committees, held after dinner in the drawing-room, my future father-in-law abruptly said, 'Young married people, as you will be, cannot burn their candle at both ends; and if they could, it would be a bad beginning. You had better therefore choose at once at which end you will prefer to burn it.'

'What do you mean, papa?' asked Emily, puzzled; for she fancied that everything would now be settled according to fashionable London rule and precedent.

'I mean about the wedding, my dear, which I suppose will take place one of these days, even if you have not already fixed the day amongst yourselves. Your choice lies between a showy and expensive wedding, with a short and limited trip to follow, or a quiet and economical wedding, with an extensive and interesting tour afterwards. To indulge in both is beyond your

'means. The sooner you decide the better.'

Mamma and Emily looked as if they would have liked both the splendid wedding and the far-reaching tour; but, having obtained the grand concession, they prudently and obediently answered, 'What would you advise, papa?'

'I advise nothing; I only put the alternative before you. What do you say to the matter, Brownlow?'

'I, sir! I shall be only too happy to fall in with whichever arrangement is judged to be best; but since you allow me to have a voice, I decidedly pronounce for the quiet wedding and the interesting tour, especially if you and Mrs. Childers can arrange to join us soon after our departure, and accompany us during the rest of the journey.'

'Brownlow is right,' said Paterfamilias. 'His ideas are in accordance with the traditions of our house. The original founders of our bank were members of the Society of Friends; and although we are no longer Quakers, we retain in many things the Quaker spirit. We prefer solidity to show; *être* to *paraître*, as they say in France. All our firm, you have observed, live in large, well-furnished, commodious houses, plain outside, full of comfort within. We indulge in extensive and luxurious gardens richly stored with the rarest plants. Our horses are the best that money can buy, but our equipages are unpretending. Our relaxations in the intervals of business are horticulture, botany, useful and instructive literature, natural history, science directed to practical aims, art leaving permanent results behind it. In this way we have taken root and prospered, enjoying at the same time a liberal share of rational pleasures, amongst which travel is included, although to a limited extent, be-

cause it demands time for its indulgence.'

Whilst Mr. Childers was delivering this statement of his personal views, Mrs. Childers and Emily listened in silence as they would to the declarations of a patriarch. After a pause, papa, taking breath, continued:

'Our house allows a fortnight's holiday a year; it grants another fortnight on the occasion of a marriage. That gives a month, in which you may see a good deal. You may make the acquaintance of some of our foreign correspondents. But, though you are to be my son-in-law, I do not wish you to exceed the firm's regulations by a single day. With a quiet wedding we can economise time as well as money. Mrs. Childers and Emily will go and reside at Dover three weeks beforehand. You can be married there at the earliest canonical hour; no difficulty will be raised about that. You will cross the Channel immediately afterwards, and reach Paris by express in time for dinner. I advise you to go to the *Hôtel de la Lune et des Ambassadeurs*, which I have found all that could be wished for. If that should be full and cannot receive you, proceed to the *Hôtel des Planètes et des Princes*.'

'And if there should be no room there?'

'Well,' answered papa, with a smile, 'one can never take too many precautions. In that case, try the *Hôtel des Etoiles et des Empereurs*. You will telegraph where you are, and we will follow. In Switzerland we will first make for Interlachen; and wherever there happens to be a lake it is a safe plan to make the *Hôtel du Lac* your place of rendezvous.'

'The plan is delightful,' I exclaimed. 'There will be no crowd of guests, who, however agreeable,

at such times are apt to be felt as intruders. Above all, we shall escape receiving that insufferable Mrs. Matcham and her daughters.'

'Why do you so dislike them, John? Mrs. Childers inquired, with Quaker-like simplicity.

'O mamma, you ought to know as well as I do. Mrs. Matcham is constantly on the look-out, seeking whom she may devour. She treats every single man exactly as a policeman treats a convicted criminal. So long as her daughters remain unmarried, celibacy is a crime to be suppressed by fine and imprisonment. She would arrest a young fellow, abduct him, and keep him in close confinement until he made one of her spinsters a formal offer.'

'Surely you exaggerate, John,' Emily mildly interposed.

'Not at all, dear. I have been more afraid of her than I have ever been of any man. Bereaved widowhood, hopeless love for another, lameness, blindness, are no valid excuses for an independent gentleman's abstaining from holy matrimony. Once when I called there and found her alone, she bluntly asked me which of her daughters, Susan or Angelica, I liked the best. "It would be difficult to say," I stammered, blushing like a fool, "because they are both so very—" "Yes, I know," she interrupted, "they are both very charming; only a man cannot offer to both. To which do *you* give the preference?" "Susan being the elder," I evasively answered, "I suppose you will like to get her settled first. Afterwards, at her house, Angelica would probably meet with some eligible match; and then—and then—" I don't know how I should have finished, when, to my relief and to her great annoyance, other visitors were announced.'

'We will endeavour to select

our guests to your liking,' Mr. Childers observed, with a quiet smile.

The guests *were* to my liking; fit, though few. I should have been very hard to please, if they had not been. Everything went off admirably. I felt perfectly happy, at the height of my wishes; and so, I think, was Emily. We breakfasted—perhaps a little too hastily to insure good digestion—and went at once on board the steamer, where our kind parents took leave of us, promising soon to follow on our track. Emily, who is a capital sailor, called the passage fair; I considered it only so-so. Nevertheless, a refreshing breeze rippled the waves and fanned our cheeks. On landing at Calais jetty, where the train awaited our arrival, we found a comfortable *coupé* secured all to our own two selves. After a short bustling halt at the station, we were soon skimming over the open plains of France, which were new to my bride, though not to myself.

I pointed out the principal objects by the way, until either she grew tired of listening or I of talking—which, I forget; for our *coupé* was placed with its back to the engine, and felt close and stuffy after the fresh Channel breeze. There was not a breath of air stirring. A feeling of heaviness came over us, and we completed a good part of our journey in silence.

At a station where the train made a halt, Emily, exclaiming, 'What lovely peaches! What beautiful grapes there are in the buffet! I must have some of those!' darted out of the *coupé* before I could prevent her by offering to go and fetch them myself. In a few seconds afterwards a strange lady was seated beside me. I stared at her; it

was not Emily, but that horrid Mrs. Matcham. And the train had started!

'Aha!' she hissed between her teeth, looking fierce as ten furies, 'I have found the means of punishing you for jilting my daughter. Poor Susan will not have been left in the lurch for nothing. I have the pleasure to inform you, my worthy sir, that I have caused your beautiful Emily to be detained at the buffet, and you will not see her again, for the present at least. It is of no use your screaming out of the window; the train does not stop till we get to Paris. And so you must marry a banker's only child, must you! All the better for us. It will give us capital damages. An action for breach of promise is already commenced, and I have retained the most hard-mouthed counsel in London. No proofs, indeed! Do you think we can't swear? No letters! Is it impossible to forge them? My poor dear Susan shall be avenged, if an angry mother can do anything towards it!'

Evidently I was shut up with a raving madwoman, who I expected every moment would tear my eyes out. And I was quite at her mercy. But though she continued to storm and scold, I reached Paris unhurt. The moment the train stopped, if not before, she jumped out of the *coupé* and disappeared.

Then came doleful detention in a dingy and stifling waiting-room while the passengers' luggage was taken from the train. It was terrible to have been thus left alone at the very outset of our wedding tour; but Emily, I was fully persuaded, would follow by the very next train, and, as she knew to what hotel we were to go, I felt just a little less anxious. And then came the rush into the spacious hall where the distribution of luggage to its owners takes place.

What order in confusion! what a strange classification of heterogeneous objects! Huge piles of packages, each bigger than the other, were there awaiting their respective claimants. One pile, overtopping all the rest, composed of trunks and portmanteaus, none of them small, some of them as big as kiosks, that might serve for sleeping-places in case of need, immediately caught my eye. On consulting my bulletin or baggage-ticket, this monstrous mountain of baggage was mine!

As I stood staring at it aghast, the railway porters also eyed it with an expression of face which said, 'We are used to heavy quantities, but this beats everything.' And Emily had promised me to take as little luggage as possible! O, woman, woman! Vanity, thy name is woman!

'Fourteen *colis*, monsieur,' said an *homme d'équippe*. 'What do you wish to have done with them?'

'Take them, when you can, to the Hôtel de la Lune et des Ambassadeurs. The load is a little unusual; but you shall be handsomely paid.'

'The Hôtel de la Lune, monsieur, no longer exists. The landlord shot himself, and no one would take it. It is shut up at present, and will be turned into a warehouse.'

'Ah,' I mused to myself, 'what will Emily do? No doubt she will remember that, in case of need, we were to betake ourselves to the Hôtel des Planètes et des Princes.'

'But if monsieur is in doubt,' the man continued, 'he can leave the luggage here, in *consigne*, by paying a trifle. When he has fixed upon an hotel he can send the porters'—and the fellow emphasised the plural 'porters'—'by giving them his bulletin, to fetch it.'

'Good! I am obliged to you. Here is something for yourself.'

I turned into the streets of Paris, alone, unfriended, solitary, slow. 'Cab! Drive to the Hôtel de la Lune.' I determined to ascertain whether it was really shut up. The cabman looked hard at me, to make sure that I was really serious. 'Drive to what was once the Hôtel de la Lune.'

When we reached it there could be no further doubt. Everything was closed and empty. The gates of the porte-cochère were locked, and on them was pasted a black-bordered bill: 'Fermé à cause de Décès.' I was satisfied, most unsatisfactorily.

'Where next?' my driver inquired.

'To the Hôtel des Planètes et des Princes.'

'At the other end of the town,' he muttered half to himself.

'Never mind; you shall have your *pourboire* in proportion.'

We started afresh.

'How will Emily be able to find me,' I thought, 'at this changed hotel, to be reached through this intricate labyrinth of streets? She will give it up in despair, or faint with anxiety by the way.' As we proceeded strange noises and shouts became audible; there was a heavy rumbling of wheels; the buildings were lighted up with a ruddy glare; the wind was laden with whiffs of black smoke and a smell of burning; a shower of sparks and flakes of fire began to fall around us. A street which we attempted to enter was blocked by a crowd.

'You cannot pass that way,' said a *sergent de ville*, stopping us.

'Why not?'

'Because the Hôtel des Planètes is on fire, and there is not the slightest chance of saving more than the bare walls. It is feared that several lives are lost already. You had better turn back again, until you reach the Boulevard.'

Heavens! Misfortunes never

come single. Here was an accumulation of disastrous accidents! But it was not yet all, by a very great deal.

'Where now, monsieur?' asked the cabman, in vexation. 'But, to tell you the truth, my horse is almost done up.'

'Give him a little water and five minutes' breathing-time. Take a bock or two of beer yourself, and then try if you can reach the Hôtel des Etoiles et des Empereurs.'

'We will see, monsieur. Perhaps we may be able. It is not so very, very far off.'

On approaching the Hôtel des Etoiles we remarked, in front of it, a confused crowd of hand-barrows, cabs, and other means of transport, laden with luggage and filled with people. Others, on foot, were accompanied by porters and commissionaires carrying their travelling-bags and trunks. But all were departing, none were arriving. The house was being deserted by every living soul as fast as possible. On asking for an explanation from one of the guests who was leaving thus abruptly,

'You must not go there,' he said; 'the house is infected with fever, spotted typhus, perhaps with plague, who knows? You see the black cloth hung over the gateway. I don't know how many people are lying there dead or dying. As soon as they are buried the whole building must be disinfected from top to bottom; indeed, the process is already begun, as you may see by the blue smoke and thick white vapour which are escaping from those upper windows. Be thankful that you did not come a few days earlier.'

Further questioning was needless. With his overworked horse, my driver just managed to take me back to our first starting-point, the Gare du Chemin de Fer du

Nord, where he set me down. There I loitered about on foot, waiting the arrival of every train, and closely scanning every female who came out from the station, in the hope of finding Emily amongst them. All night long I waited and watched, pacing backwards and forwards—my wedding-night!—counting every stroke of the clock, and waking up out of my despondent lethargy at every sound that might indicate the entrance of a train into the station. All in vain! I could not telegraph; for the name of the place where Emily had left me was completely obliterated from my memory, if I ever knew it. The dawn arrived; then broad daylight. The idea struck me, I don't know why, to betake myself to the station whence we were to start for Switzerland; so, weary, worn out, and heartsick, I wended my way towards the Gare de Lyon.

When about half-way there, and considerably past the pestilence-stricken hotel, I heard the sound of wheels approaching. It was an open cab; in it were seated Mr. and Mrs. Childers and Emily. I hailed them, making signs to attract their notice; but they did not see me any more than if I had not been there. They drove on towards the station, unconscious of my presence, and I was soon again left absolutely alone in my misery. No, not quite alone; for there, on the opposite side of the street, stood Mrs. Matcham grinning in triumph at my discomfiture. At any other time I hardly know in what harsh terms I should not have accosted her; as it was, the dominant impulse was to overtake and join my bride and her parents at the Gare de Lyon.

I reached it out of breath, but all too late. Still I learned that a middle-aged lady and gentleman with their daughter, whose description exactly answered to my people,

had left, first class, by the train just started. Of course I waited there, and took the very next train in that direction. And in this way I rushed forwards, ever on and on, with no more respite than the change of trains and conveyances necessitated, until I reached the Hôtel du Lac at Interlachen.

Had Mr. and Mrs. Childers with their daughter arrived? Yes. Had they inquired for Mr. John Brownlow? No, not a word. Very strange! Where were they? They had taken a carriage to explore the Devil's Glen. Give me another, to follow them, without a moment's delay.

I was in the carriage as if by magic. Starting at full gallop we soon reached the glen. It was narrow, black, precipitous, closing in as if its opposite sides were soon to meet. At the bottom roared a foaming torrent, fed by a waterfall from the mountain-side. The waterfall was spanned by an Alpine bridge; the road, after crossing the bridge, entered a hazel thicket. Along that road Mr. and Mrs. Childers were strolling, carelessly gathering nuts and wild raspberries. To my repeated signals they paid no attention whatever; it seemed as if I and my carriage were invisible. I alighted.

Looking over the parapet of the bridge, I saw that there were steps cut in the rock, leading to the very foot of the cascade, where its waters were boiling and eddying in a black basin of unknown depth, and that, half-way down those steps, slippery with spray and unctuous lichens, Emily was standing, gathering ferns and mosses. The least movement she made on that treacherous rock might plunge her headlong into the abyss below. I dared not call out to warn her; I could not, my voice stuck in my throat. I resolved to climb down to her, give her my hand, and

assist her to effect her retreat upwards in safety. There was not an instant to be lost. I at once decided to scale the parapet of the bridge, and to creep, with a careful and cautious foot, down those perilous steps until I reached Emily.

At that moment I felt a firm hand laid on my shoulder, while a well-known voice exclaimed,

'John, dear John, what are you about! You are surely not going to get out of the window while the train is running along at full speed!'

I looked. It was Emily herself holding me fast.

'I have found you at last, then!' I gasped, overcome with joy. 'Kiss me, my darling. Again, and again, that I may be sure it is not another intrusion of that fiend, Mrs. Matcham, who has been the cause of all our troubles. I shall keep you with me now, hard and fast, instead of having to wander all night alone about the streets of Paris. I forgive you all, now that

I have you back once more. I forgive your leaving me so thoughtlessly; I forgive the tremendous size and unwieldiness of your fourteen portmanteaus, trunks, and boxes—'

'Fourteen, dearest! Why, I have only two, and those almost small ones. We can take them with us in our cab to the Hôtel de la Lune.'

'We can't go there; it is shut up on account of death. The Planètes must be blazing still, and the Etoiles is infected by typhus or something worse.'

'You must have been dreaming, John. What can you know about those hotels? We have not yet reached Paris, though in a few minutes we shall. My father wrote to secure us rooms at the "Lune," and received a reply that they would be ready for us.'

'I suppose, then, dear, I must have been dreaming; and I thank Heaven it was only a dream. But never again, my darling Emily, never let me go to sleep in a stifling *coupé*, with our backs to the engine, after crossing the sea.'

MODERN ARCADY.

DEAR Daphne, let the busy throng
Pursue their countless avocations;
And Greed and Pleasure speed along,
Intent on varied occupations.
Suppose we leave the world awhile—
Its empty joys and empty labours—
To chat in free and easy style
About the folks we own for neighbours.

Beneath yon elm-tree come and sit,
Where not a soul can hear or see us;
What sylvan solitude so fit
For Daphne and for Melibœus?

Here gently sighs the summer breeze,
 The dewdrops on the daisy glisten ;
 We both may say whate'er we please,
 For nobody is near to listen.

The changeful Corydon, they say,
 No longer woos the tender Phyllis ;
 'Twas only just the other day
 He took a stroll with Amaryllis.
 The last would be the better match ;
 She still is young, and quite the lady.
 Miss P. could scarce be called a ' catch ;'
 Her antecedents, too, are shady.

High play appears a costly sin,
 And last October or November
 Amyntas had the brokers in
 (Which month it was I don't remember).
 To play *écarté* at your club,
 Or whist, perhaps, is very jolly ;
 But laying ponies on the rub
 Is little short of utter folly.

Fair Delia, who could never touch
 A tiny glass of cherry-brandy,
 Now sips—and likes it very much—
 Whene'er she finds a bottle handy.
 When cherries pall—as cherries *do*—
 The nymph will care no more about them ;
 But manage, in a week or two,
 To take her brandy neat without them.

Young Strephon's was a deal too rash
 To prove at all a happy marriage ;
 Though he and Chloe cut a dash,
 And go about, and keep a carriage.
 'Tis pleasant for a time, you know,
 To be extravagant and showy ;
 But I predicted long ago
 That he was not the man for Chloe.

Then Lalage through half the town
 Her best has done to scatter scandals,
 And vainly seeks to set us down
 As Goths, or Visigoths, or Vandals.
 'Tis well, dear Daphne, *we* can say
 No mortal ever yet has found us
 To spite or malice giving way,
 Or speaking ill of those around us.

HENRY S. LEIGH.





MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OF OUR COUNTRY HOUSE.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OF OUR COUNTRY HOUSE.

OWING to financial pressure in the shape of heavy losses abroad, I accepted the offer of an old-fashioned furnished house in the country, which had been ten years untenanted, as a residence in the meantime to save the expenses of town life; and thither, in a cold and stormy November day, amid torrents of rain, I set out along with all I held most dear on earth—my family. That comprised my wife and three young children. As we left our cheery town house for the last time, many a heavy thought oppressed me, on account of those dependent on me, at the waywardness of Fortune, and the 'ups and downs' of life; and especially as to what she might still have in store for us.

We had a long drive in a comfortable close conveyance hired at the nearest railway town, from the windows of which the children were delighted to watch the new scenery as we drove along. The smallest little darling of the three, just eight months old, was as comfortable in his wraps and furs as if he were at the warmest fireside. At length we found ourselves at the door of our new house, far in the heart of the country. Dreary and solitary enough it looked, standing by itself at the foot of a slope, with its short avenue of trees leading up to the door. Soon, however, we were inside, and roaring fires in every room helped to raise our spirits and dissipate the gloom, by imparting that cheeriness which fires only can give.

Next morning, on exploring our new quarters, we found that their appearance did not altogether belie

their weird and ghostly reputation. Some stories we had heard about the house being haunted, as the reason of its remaining so long unoccupied, we, of course, only laughed at. The walls were of enormous thickness, and several of the rooms panelled. Already, within the panelling, the rats and mice, apprised of the signs of habitation by the fires which had been put in several days before our arrival, once again began to hold their revels. The main passage was narrow, the stairs of stone—one stair leading from the middle floor up to the bedrooms above, containing the public rooms; the other down to the kitchen range of rooms below, most of which were really *below ground*, damp and dark, with their walls glistening with moisture. This latter stair led off the lobby near the entrance, and the very idea of descending it gave one a shudder. Up-stairs the walls were sloped in over the bedrooms, and so as to give them a square shape, a part of the width had been cut off by partitions next the gable, which left a large dark empty space all round between wall and partition, enough, as the proprietor said, to accommodate half a regiment of infantry. This, however, had the one advantage of keeping the rooms dry. At the back of the house a clear brook rippled along, subject to rise and fall with every shower of rain.

For four or five days the storm that had ushered us in continued, but at length one morning a clear bright sun broke out over the landscape, showing us, from the top of the slope, our insular position,

with the German ocean on three sides in the distance. Sea coast towns were also scattered along the shore at intervals, and there appeared a pretty undulating country sparsely planted with trees, without village or hamlet anywhere to be seen among the large cultivated fields, except the big farm steadings that appeared here and there at considerable distances apart. As time passed, and we settled down in our new abode, I found that the days did not hang so heavily on my hands as I expected, what with the increasing acquaintanceship with very kind and pleasant neighbours, and shooting (kindly granted me by the proprietor) among hares, partridge, &c., and especially at large flocks of geese which had taken a fancy to the neighbourhood. The children enjoyed the country freedom immensely, and the roses daily deepened in their cheeks from the strong ocean air some seven hundred feet above the sea level.

One day I was engaged putting up a swing for Maud and Will, to their great delight, in the shed that adjoined the house at the back—an old building of two stories, the lower one of which had open arches, and the upper, once used as a granary, was approached by a trap stair. All at once I noticed through the pane of the outside kitchen-door, that led into the long passage of that floor, the flutter of a child's dress I well knew, and, at the same moment, a shadow as of someone rapidly passing. Hardly believing my eyes, I looked again, knowing that no one went down to that now disused floor, the outer door of which remained locked, and least of all that the baby would be taken there. There was nothing now to be seen. Our one servant, I knew, had left for an afternoon holiday, and would not be back for some hours. With a shiver run-

ning all over me, half congealing my blood, I flew to the door and looked along the narrow passage, but nothing was visible. The furthest end door that opened to the staircase leading to the public rooms above still remained closed. I kicked at the outside door, but nothing save the echo replied; so I next rushed to the low kitchen window and looked in. All was undisturbed there and motionless! The cobwebs still crossed the doors and corners just as they had wont to be. Taking the two children with me, I hurried round to the front of the house, where I found their mother at the front door with her knitting, enjoying the bright sunshine. Quickly telling her what I had seen as calmly as I could, though not too carefully, as the rising pallor on her face betokened, I hurriedly asked where she had left baby. Before I had half done she was flying up-stairs, followed by me, to baby's room, where, as she said, she had left him quietly sleeping in his cot. The cot was empty! Our darling was away. The clothes even were gone. Without a moment's delay, after a rapid glance through the adjoining rooms, we hurried down-stairs, down the second flight to the dark, damp, kitchen floor, and from room to room we flew, but not a trace of our darling. I had then to carry poor Helen upstairs—she had fallen fainting on the floor. I laid her on a couch, and endeavoured to recover her, in the first place. For some time she remained in a dazed state, and then, as recollection gradually came back, I urged the necessity of her keeping up till we had made a thorough search for our child, as, from the time I had seen his dress, it was impossible he could be anywhere but still in the house. With the clear and rapid 'instinct' with which she saw most things, she

made the effort needed, and which, I could see at the time, was almost beyond her strength. Again we searched and searched, in the house, round about the house, and everywhere there was the faintest possibility that the child could be concealed, but in vain; and how the time passed from the moment we first missed him (about three in the afternoon) till darkness began to close in on a short winter day, I can yet but faintly imagine.

Going round once more to the back of the house for the twentieth time, all of a sudden a faint glimmer of light from across the brook caught my eye, along with what I felt certain was the flutter of a child's dress. It seemed in the dusk to be only a few hundred yards off. Without waiting a moment, and dreading to utter an alarm, I sprang across the brook, through the deep swamp and rushes beyond, and, reaching the hard firm meadow, flew along in the direction of the light, of which another glimmer again directed me. The light, I could see, was moving onwards, and as I increased my pace I found I was distinctly gaining on it. A fresh glimmer now and again kept me right, and I only feared breaking down ere it could be overtaken. So husbanding my strength as well as my excitement would allow, I kept up the pace, determined to succeed if it cost me my last breath. Gradually, as the chase continued, the light drew nearer, the glimmer stronger, and the flutter of the child's dress now proved a certainty. A few minutes more and I must be up with it. I thought, too, I could distinguish in the darkness the outline of a man; but, so thick had the gloom now become, this might have been fancy, as no gleam that lit up the child's dress ever fell on the figure. For a few seconds I noticed the light linger

at one spot, move up and down, then again move rapidly on. But now, for the first time, I lost sight of the white dress. In a second or two more I was up to the place where the light had lingered. This brought me alongside a broad straggling whin fence, well known to me as a good cover for partridge. While rushing past, a consciousness of something white amongst the furze arrested my steps, and pushing in among them I bent down over what seemed a mass of white like a snow drift, in the midst of which, sound asleep, and comfortable and cosy in his warm blankets and rug, as if he were still in his cot, I discovered our darling! Even the blankets had been drawn carefully up round his soft warm face, to allow just enough room for air without the least danger of cold. As I pressed my face to the little round cheeks, and felt the warm breath coming and going, the revulsion was so great, coupled with the exhaustion of my run of over a mile, that I could only at the moment sink down beside him. I dared not yet trust myself to carry him back, anxious as I felt about those at home. While resting with him in my arms I noticed the light grow fainter and fainter till it disappeared in the distance. At length, when sufficiently recovered, I rose with my newly-found treasure, to try and retrace my steps homeward in the now pitchy darkness. Carefully I groped my way back, holding him close to me, and feeling as if the time were an age ere I could return to exchange the grief there for joy. The light from an upper window of the house guided me, otherwise in the thick darkness I might have lost my way.

At length the ripple of the brook at the back-door met my ears, and recrossing carefully I found myself

once more at the back of the house beside the swing, and at the first scene of the mysterious disappearance, an event never to be forgotten, though ending so happily. On coming round to the front all was quiet, the outer door still open, the lower lamps unlit, and not a sound even of the children's voices to be heard. I dreaded the sudden effect of the discovery of her darling on Helen, and my sole anxiety now was how I could break the glad news to her as gently as possible. So, quietly ascending the stair, I reached her room, found its door ajar, and looked in. There she was, seated at a table, her head bent forward on her hands, and perfectly motionless. Maud and Will were sitting on the hearthrug subdued and silent, looking wistfully up towards their mother. Softly entering the room I signed to the children, who at once saw me, to keep silent, and as softly I laid him down once more in his cot. As his cheek touched the pillow a smile crept over his face as if even in a dream he felt he was again in safety. And then crossing the room I sat quietly down beside his mother. She seemed in a sort of stupor, out of which only slowly and with difficulty I succeeded in rousing her, and by degrees, as she caught my cheerful tone, a new light seemed to break in upon her, and she looked me straight in the face. There was no use my attempting to dissemble. The look of good news was too plain to be hidden, though I feared at first the effect of the reaction. Before I had half told my tale she caught the meaning looks of the children, and gave one swift glance towards the cot. In an instant she was there, and for a moment the overwhelming joy was almost as overpowering as the grief. As the little subject of all this care was loaded with caresses he opened his

big black eyes with a smile of welcome all round; and as each in turn got a share of his smiles we could hardly realise that the past had not all been a dream. How our house was changed from one of sorrow to one of joy that evening I can still well remember. Never after that was baby left for one minute alone, nor ever was there a chance given of that day's history being repeated. Early next morning we made a thorough search of the house from room to room, but nowhere could we obtain a clue to any secret door or passage that might throw light on the mystery. After the foregoing experience it may be supposed I would fain have changed our residence had not strong pecuniary reasons stood in the way, and besides I had a strong desire sooner or later to be at the bottom of the mystery.

As the above events began to lose their vividness, without any fresh incident to excite suspicion, time passed pleasantly on. One day as I was round in the shed cutting up some trees, which a recent storm had blown down, with Maud and Will playing by, I suddenly became aware of the shadow once more crossing the kitchen-door. This time, however, it was alone. Our baby, I knew, was too well watched to be spirited away again. In a moment I was at the door, looking in along the dark passage; but all was empty there! Instead, however, now of rushing round to the front of the house, as I did before, and giving the alarm, I kept watch, and sent Maud quietly round to give information. Keeping Will by me, I watched Maud till she reached the front of the house, where I had left her mother with the servant, attending baby in his perambulator. They were all soon round, and, pointing out to Helen a knoll

at a little distance, which commanded a view of three sides of the house, or of any one attempting to leave it, I asked her to retire there with the servant (a strong country girl) and children, and keep watch. Hardly had they left when the shadow again crossed the kitchen door; and immediately afterwards a slight sound in the granary drew my attention. Unable to keep back longer, or delay for the sending of a neighbour, which was my first idea, I sprang up the trap stair and listened. In a little the sound was repeated, now distinctly as of a door closing, and then ceased; but no trace could I find of door or opening of any kind. I took care that, from where I stood, I could still see the group on the knoll. Striking on the wall where the sound seemed to have proceeded, a faint apparent echo reached me; but this, I thought, could be traced to a distinct separate sound. Repeating the blow again and again on different parts of the wall, at last a hollow sound seemed to answer the stroke, and simultaneously, a part of the wall I had not noticed before, to the side, and nearer the gable, opened slightly, disclosing a long narrow rent. Another stroke on the same place, I found, was on a stone that yielded to pressure, and showed a widening crevice. With further pressure on the stone, which appeared to be connected with the door by a spring, it reached at last its full width, and disclosed a narrow door in the wall, from which a passage with a dark stone staircase led downwards. This staircase was just wide enough for one man to crush through. Without hesitating, and with a sort of desperation, due partly, perhaps, to my entire unbelief in ghosts, I entered the passage and began to descend the steps, after taking the

precaution to get a heavy lump of wood and leave it in the doorway to prevent any accidental closing. As I went down the narrow staircase, a slight rustle from below told me pretty surely I should find some one there. Each step now brought me nearer the object of my search; while the flicker of light that presently came from below showed me I was near the foot of the stair. In another second or two I found myself in a narrow passage at the foot, faintly lit by a crevice in the wall, and with the figure of a man dimly visible before me.

There we stood confronting each other, not a sound to be heard but the breathing of each. After some moments had passed thus in dead silence, I put out my left hand to feel what sort of wall resisted me on that side, and, if possible, let in some light, and struck against what seemed to be the wooden panelling of a room. The movement caused no change in my *vis-à-vis*. Next placing my back against one side of the passage, I put my foot against the panelling, and tried to force open a deal; but in vain. It was too strong to yield to my pressure. Still the figure remained motionless. I then bethought myself of my box of 'vestas,' which, as a smoker, I always carried, and struck a light. As the darkness fled, and the whole passage became visible, with the figure in it, whom and what did I see? For a little I could hardly believe my eyes, and wondered if I, too, were in a dream. A man, certainly, in full flesh and blood, and no ghost, was there, motionless still, his head slightly bent, and eyes fixed on vacancy as in a dream. No sign of seeing me, or of the least alarm at my presence, appeared in his face. But what was strangest of all remains to be told. The face was that of an

honest carpenter of our neighbourhood, whom I well knew as a very respectable steady man. I had heard he had been in the habit of disappearing now and then from his house at night for a day or two at a time, and of returning again by night as quietly as he left; while he either refused, or was unable, to give any account of his absence. The truth was now plain. The man was a somnambulist. There, too, was the lantern in his hand, still unlit, which, on the former occasion, had guided me by its light. On being addressed, he seemed at first to come 'back to himself' slightly, as if half aware of my presence, and of being caught, but again lapsed into his dreamy state. Going up to him I bade him follow me, which he quietly did, up the staircase, and out by the way I had entered, till he appeared at the foot of the trap stair in the presence of the wondering group on the grass, who were now getting anxious about my absence.

Telling the man quietly to go home, and to be careful never to repeat his intrusion, he unhesitatingly took the straight road home, and walked steadily away. The effect of the discovery on Helen, her speechless astonishment and relief at the same time, at such a very practical and homely solution of the robbery of her baby, may be imagined. The man, it appeared, was liable to be affected differently at different times. Sometimes he

had more than his ordinary waking wits about him in a certain groove, in the form of an invincible cunning, enabling him to elude discovery, and baffling all attempts at tracing him. At intervals he had always disappeared during the night, the somnambulism appearing to continue for one or two days at a time. His mode of ingress has been described; and I found, on carefully examining the passage, that while one end of it led down from the granary, as mentioned, the other led up at the back of the panelling by a flight of steps to the rooms above, into which he obtained entrance by a sliding deal in the dark enclosure between rooms and gable. The man was about fifty-five, had resided in the district since childhood, and became acquainted with the secret passage in the course of some repairs, of which he alone had charge—a secret he kept to himself. I afterwards learnt that he had gradually awoke on his way home, probably from the disturbing influences he had encountered; while the warning given him under his somnambulism had its effect. At the same time, needless to say, I had the secret passages firmly built up, so that no one might again be subjected, either to secret intrusion, or to those hours of suspense we underwent between the losing and finding of our child.

And thus ends my first experience of our country house.

W. S.

A RIVER IDYLL.

Down where the bank of the bright stream's defended
By poplars and pollards and old willow-trees,
Swings 'neath the growth of the greenery, suspended
And rocked by the breeze,

A hammock, which holds in the safest of keeping
A three-volume novel, a sunshade, a dress
All muslin and roses, King Charlie who's sleeping,
A parlour princess.

Apollo a handful of gold-dust is dashing
Adown on the hammock's sweet burden, and sod;
In the water a too greedy barbel is splashing
At the end of a rod.

The soft-hearted birds in the boughs, in the flowers
The bees and grasshoppers, are singing away;
From the neighbouring field come the voices of mowers
This haymaking day.

Just might I wake her with kisses and catch her,
Would she laugh, pay the forfeit, or read me a lecture?
She'd make, could I find but a Tissot to sketch her,
An exquisite picture.

Even then, at the best, one must be disappointed;
For how catch the music, and fix it for ever,
Of mowers' and bees' and birds' songs disjointed?—
There's no one so clever.

Better leave her to doze in the sun's smile, and waken
When is ended the bees' and the birds' serenade;
In the mean time I'll free the poor fish she has taken,
And place in its stead

This song at the end of her hook, as a token
The some one who visited her was a bard;
Who loved with respect, whose heart is unbroken,
Who had not a card.

AUGUSTUS M. MOORE.

A HOLIDAY TRIP TO SWEDEN AND THE GOTA CANAL.

Is it that Switzerland is 'played out'? Is it that France has become almost more expensive than England, France which used to be called the playground of the world? *Ai de me!* that a visit to the playground should be 'too expensive.' However that may be, certain it is that no question is more often asked among Englishmen—men, that is, with limited means, and almost unlimited capacities for enjoyment—than, 'Where shall we go this summer?' Of course with the rich man this question is soon answered; he has his yacht down at Cowes—it must be used; his moor up in Scotland—it must be shot over; his constituents to appease; his tenants to propitiate. His duties are many, and they have become almost too irksome to him—poor devil! he finds little difficulty in answering the question, 'Where shall he go to?' and it is to be observed that the answer he gives to this question invariably commences with the words, 'I must.'

No; it is not with the gentlemen who 'must' go, it is with those who 'may,' that we have to do; with those who, having had their eleven consecutive months of hard work, are now looking forward to their one month of pleasure, and who wish to extract during that month the maximum amount of pleasure which can be got at moderate cost. Switzerland and France have become too expensive, the trip up the Rhine has been done too often, Vienna, the Tyrol, and Italy are too far off, and are even more expensive than France;

where shall they go then? I will tell you in one word—Sweden.

Do you want moderate prices, absurdly moderate prices, go to Sweden. Why, in Sweden the wages of a man (coachman, footman, or groom) are six pounds a year, the wages of an extravagantly overpaid woman four pounds, and everything else in Sweden is cheap in proportion, with the single exception of clothing, and as the traveller generally takes that with him he is not affected thereby. Railway travelling, too, is cheap; the fares are not much above half what they are in England. It is true that the pace the trains go is not more than half the pace at which trains are made to travel with us, from twenty to twenty-four miles being with them the usual speed of even the express trains; but then who cares for that when the scenery around is so pretty, and water, either placid lake or babbling river, is seldom out of sight?—added to which the stoppages at the stations are amply allowed for, and the food supplied is, moreover, better than can be got at perhaps any railway stations in Europe. The usual charges at these stations are, for breakfast, 2 kroner, or 2s. 3d., and for dinner 3 kroner, or 3s. 4d.; and for no ordinary breakfast or dinner are these charges made. Do not think that you will be served with the tough piece of beefsteak of old England, or the cutlet and mashed potato (mingled with the flies and wasps) of sunny France; for indeed to the breakfast

that is served to the hungry traveller I know no expression that will so well apply as the French epithet *plantureux*. Breakfast or dinner in Sweden consists of a meal most succulent and at the same time curious, a meal the like of which you will not find in Europe, or out of Europe for the matter of that. And how do you get to this Utopia, Sweden, where the scenery is so beautiful, where the prices are still moderate, the people still civil, and the tourist a thing still almost unknown? There are many ways of reaching it; but the best way is to go by sea and return (almost entirely) by land, or to reverse the order and go by land, returning by sea from Gothenburg. The first, I think, however, is for many reasons preferable, one of these being that you are more likely to have the wind 'with you,' no slight matter in a sea journey of some two or three days.

Let us, then, go by sea. It is possible to go to Gothenburg direct from the port of London; the boats are good—I speak of their sea-going qualities—but how comes it that all the vessels that sail from the above port are so invariably deficient in their commissariat arrangements? London stewards seem to be utterly unaware that herrings and plaice are not the only fish that swim in the sea, and that potatoes and cabbages are not the only vegetables that are grown in the United Kingdom. Ribs of beef slightly raw, gristly boiled legs of mutton that have got all their sinews on, beefsteaks swimming in browning—called gravy—and fried eggs on 'cushions' of bacon, things not often seen out of a pot-house; such is the fare you meet with on even the best of these London boats. You will, however, make a great mistake if you think that the

stewards of these floating pot-houses do not know how to charge; they do, and like Scotch hotel-keepers.

A better road, the best in fact, to Sweden is *viâ* Hull. Here the boats are as good as those from London, whilst the food and the general arrangements for the comfort of the passengers is infinitely better. I do not mean that they are floating palaces, like many of the ships that sail between England and America; the Americans are a people who understand good living much better than we do, and the competition to carry the worthy citizens across 'the pond' is such that the companies have been obliged to make a point of a good commissariat, much against their will, be it understood, for it goes against the grain with the ordinary English steward to give more than the plainest, not to say coarsest, of fare. He gets you on board, and when there you are at his mercy; he found, however, the American citizen too much for him; it was citizen *v.* steward, and steward went to the wall. The food on the Hull boats is about as good as it was on the American lines before the steward had quite knocked under and got to see things in a better light. Sail, then, from Hull. The boats go every Saturday morning, early, very early, and will land you in Gothenburg at an equally early hour on Monday morning. On reaching that port you will find at the hotels a few English travellers, who have arrived by the London boat twenty-four hours before you. The hotels are two, they are close together, and belong to the same proprietor; the names are the Gota Küllare (Küllare=keller or cellar) and Haglund's. At the latter there is no restaurant, and the guests consequently have to come across to the former for their meals. Go to the Gota

Källare ; it is clean and good, and the restaurant attached to it particularly so ; the proprietor also is careful to have a waiter who speaks English, no small advantage in a country where few except the upper classes speak anything but their own language. And whilst we are on this subject one word to the stranger. French and German will help him little in Sweden. With the French the people come little in contact. The Germans they hate—the effect perhaps of wars in past ages—and though some of the people understand German, far more understand English, and this particularly applies to the inhabitants of sea-coast towns. Moreover they like the English, and go out of their way to oblige them, while for the Germans they will scarcely stir a foot. The upper classes are good linguists, almost as good as the Russians ; and it is not uncommon in Sweden to come across people speaking four, five, and six different languages. They are likewise extremely obliging, and will, if they see a stranger in difficulty, step forward and offer him their assistance before he even has time to ask it ; and this is done with so frank and friendly an air, that a man must be a savage not to feel pleased at finding himself among such a pleasant-mannered people.

Let us, however, to the Gota Källare to breakfast. Here the Swedish bread will first attract the notice of the English stranger ; it is of two sorts, white rolls, like the *semel brod* of Germany, usually cut in slices and placed in wicker baskets on the table in the middle of the room ; and brown, thin, hard, bitter-sour bread, or rather biscuit, something like the Jewish *pass-over bread*. This last the natives greatly affect, eating it with butter, *par préférence*.

Upon the table, in the centre of the room, stand also several decanters containing the liqueurs of the country—kummel, pome-ranz, &c., also plates with raw saumon, raw herring, salami, Gota sausage, and other cold meats, which are supposed to whet the appetite. A table such as I describe is invariably found in every well-regulated Swedish restaurant, and is one of the most remarkable ‘institutions’ of the country ; indeed a Swede would scarcely know his own country if it was deprived of this ‘feature,’ which is called a *Smörgösbord* or *Smörbrödsbord* (*Anglicè*, bread-and-butter board). Englishmen new to Sweden generally look very shyly at this institution on their arrival, but curiosity impels them, and before many days they foregather round the board, and seem to appreciate the fare provided quite as much as does the native.

Albert Smith used to say that an Englishman’s first question on arriving in any town was, ‘How can I best get out of this place ?’ There are two ways of leaving Gothenburg for the interior ; either you can take the train, which will land you in fourteen hours in Stockholm, or you can take the steamer, which in summer leaves three times a week (on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays) by the Gota canal, *viâ Trollhättan*, and this is what we strongly advise all travellers who have time at their disposal to do. Instead of taking you fourteen hours to get to Stockholm it will, however, take you sixty hours or more ; but then you are well repaid by seeing some of the calmest, loveliest, most charming lake and river scenery in the world. The steamers on the Gota canal, though small, are very strongly-built boats, admirably clean, and well found in every way ; but they are small, and accommodation is

consequently limited. Go, then, as soon as breakfast is over, and secure your berths; the porter at the hotel—what would these hotels be without their porters?—will procure you a guide who, for the small sum of threepence, will conduct you to the offices of the Gota Canal Steamship Company, where you will be shown a plan of the ship, and can choose your own berths, one cabin being allotted to two persons. On leaving the office of the steamship company, you will do well to make for the nearest tram-cars and ask to be put down at the baths. Baths were things almost unknown in the middle or dark ages, and, as things of modern invention, are easy to ask for, being much the same in all languages. But though much the same to ask for, they are not much the same things in reality. Turkish baths and Russian baths are very different things from English baths, and so again Swedish baths differ materially from either, and in large towns, such as Gothenburg, and still more Stockholm, they are very luxurious things. In Stockholm there are several bath establishments, and the porter at your hotel will direct you to the best or to all, for some people try them all. The worst is that at these bathing establishments none of the attendants speak English, German, or French, and the results are sometimes very comical. English hours are not Swedish hours; I do not mean that clocks differ—they do—but the dinner-hours differ still more. In Sweden you breakfast, indeed, between eight and ten, but you dine between two and five, and supper is in vogue between eight and eleven. Englishmen, consequently, going to dine between seven and eight often find themselves in a fix, for dinner with the Swedes has been long over and supper not yet begun; the *chef*

and the servants too will be having their own meals, their interval. Do not think, however, that a Swede who has chosen waiting as his vocation will look upon you as an utter barbarian for wanting to feed at hours unknown to him. No, he will civilly take your orders and do the best he can for you. How different is the French waiter in his manner when he finds himself similarly situated, and with what withering scorn he regards the luckless foreigner who is ignorant of *les usages*!

Gothenburg boasts of one of the best restaurants in Sweden—the Borsen restauration. The Borse is easy to find; it is in the middle of the town, but the restaurant is not so easy to get at, as it is upstairs over the bourse, and the stairs are rather complicated; however, the two words ‘Borsen restauration’ will always find someone who will take the trouble to direct you to it. In the vestibule the curious German habit obtains of an attendant with a looking-glass and a comb, which he offers as the one thing needful, but as to washhand-basin and jug there is none. In the restaurant itself you will be handed an ample but rather complicated ‘carte’—a Swedish ‘carte’ without equivalents—soups (*soppa*) being mixed up under the same head as *mjolk* (milk), *filbunke* (curds), and *vinkallskal* (the best drink in Sweden; superior, in fact, to the much-vaunted Germain *maistrank*). The food, however, is so good that you can scarcely go wrong in what you order; take, however, the following as a genuine Swedish dinner—*grönsoppa* soup, fish *stek* *helgefunda*, meat-*kallops* with a *grönsallad*, bird *tjader*, sweet *strutar med creme*. One portion of each of the above will be sufficient for two persons; the price, with a bottle of claret, about 7 kroner, or eight shillings.

There is another soup that is still more popular in Sweden than grösoppa, namely saftsoppa, but this we in England should scarcely look upon as a soup. It is purple in appearance, syrupy to the taste, has small buttons of pastry floating on its surface, and is eminently 'satisfying' to the appetite; few strangers indeed like to venture on it, and those few who do wish they had followed the example of those who do not. We cannot leave the subject of Swedish cookery without referring to the admirable way in which they cook game, poultry, and ducklings, in fact birds of all sorts, and the traveller when he is in doubt cannot do better than order some winged thing.

After dinner, in every town of any importance in Sweden, there is some pretty well-laid-out garden to turn to, with good music and lots of company, for these people, like the Germans, are a music-loving and smoke-loving people. The gardens usually have halls attached to them where, in bad weather, the band plays; needless, of course, to say that when the band plays in the open it is far more enjoyable. The refreshments at these places are very cheap and good. Wine, of course, is expensive throughout Sweden; it has to be brought from afar, but the home-made drinks are very moderate. The ladies are fond of drinking punch. Now Swedish punch is a seductive drink; a little is good, but, beware, it goes to the head, and such a head as it produces, O, a thousand times worse than any known European concoction can produce! Beer (öl) is good in Sweden, as good as in Germany; porter, too, is better than with us, and Gothenburg is particularly celebrated for its porter; milk is much drunk in the open air, as are also the thousand and one liqueurs

which are so freely distributed throughout the country.

But it is time to turn our backs upon Gothenburg, and make a start by the canal. We leave at eleven o'clock (Swedish time) on Tuesday night, say by the Baron von Platen steamer—von Platen is a great name in Sweden, it has produced statesmen, engineers, &c., not a few—and at six o'clock on Wednesday morning we are rung up by a bell, that reminds us of our old school days, to see the falls of Trollhättan. The way the water comes down these falls is remarkable, but the way the ship goes up is still more so. It is a way water has of falling, and one has seen it do it before; but few of us have seen a ship of two or three hundred tons on the rise, as it may here be seen. The way the canal has been engineered—by a von Platen—in the vicinity of these falls of Trollhättan is truly wonderful; the vessel goes on rising step by step from the level of the sea till it reaches its highest altitude (390 feet) between lakes Wener and Wetter, then it descends till it again reaches the sea-level and emerges into the Baltic. I do not mean that all these steps are together, close one to the other; no, they are placed usually in flights, and the biggest flight is that alongside the waterfalls of Trollhättan. Here step by step the ship ascends from lock to lock, as the gates are opened in front and shut behind it; but it is a weary process, taking from two to three hours for this its first flight, so you soon get tired of watching it, and go off to see the waterfall, which is a far more lively affair. Strangers at this point of their journey invariably remark how easy it is to fall and how hard to rise in the world. Trollhättan passed, we go on board again to breakfast; a good breakfast and a substantial one, a break-

fast that makes one blush when one thinks what would be the breakfast of an unfortunate who found himself in our country on a canal steamer belonging to a not over rich company. And with regard to breakfasts, I have travelled much and everywhere; I have found that where the commissariat is good, there the temper of the passengers is good; no matter what bad weather or other drawbacks they come in for, only put the passengers down to good food and they will soon unbend, and talk and laugh where otherwise they would keep a moody sulky silence. Few can keep their tempers when their digestions are badly taxed, and a good breakfast is of more importance than some people think. On these Swedish canal boats no one's digestion will be unfairly taxed. Breakfast is served at 8.30, dinner at 1, and supper at 7; coffee and liqueurs can be had on deck at any time you may be pleased to order them; a good deckhouse and awning give shelter from the sun and rain; a pleasant captain, who speaks English—all sailors in Sweden speak English—and a well-disposed lot of passengers, who will talk with you in English or French, German or Swedish; what more can the most *exigeant* traveller require as regards mind and body? And then as to scenery: a broad ever-winding stream, broad enough in most parts to let three steamers pass abreast, for ever coming in sight of, and crossing, the lovely island lakes, or stopping at flights of step-like locks, which, as each step takes from ten to twenty minutes (according to the amount of activity shown by the lock-keepers), gives the passengers ample time to walk on ahead along the flower-covered banks, the good-natured captain never failing to stop and

pick up the successive groups of passengers as his vessel comes up with them. Perhaps the prettiest part of the whole journey is the last—the approach to Stockholm. Here we steam for four hours, amongst an archipelago of islands, towards the sea. Suddenly the grand old town stands out in front, stretching across with its islands and its bridges from shore to shore; the heights of Mosebacke towering above you; the solid mass of the King's palace on an island right in front; the white new houses of the Norrbro lying thick on the northern bank; it is, indeed, a town in which Nature seems to have combined with man, making one of the loveliest spots upon this world of ours, a capital of which, indeed, Sweden may well be proud. Let us leave the vessel, and make for the hotel. Before we go, however, we must pay the steward's bill on the boat for the eatables and drinkables, coffee, liqueurs, &c., for two days and a half; how much? 'Thirteen kroner (14s. 3d.) for you, sir,' said the little maiden, the steward's daughter. How a British 'steward' would have groaned in anguish could he have heard it!

Hotels in Stockholm are good, the charges at all being very much alike. Of big hotels there are three, the Grand, the Rydberg, and the Kung Carl; the two first of these belong to the same proprietor, a Frenchman, who is most obliging. The food at all is good, the Rydberg having the name of being the best; the prices, however, at the Grand are slightly in excess of those at the other two, and rightly so, for the cuisine, attendance, and 'locale' at the Grand are each and all decidedly superior to the Rydberg at present; the latter, in fact, rather lives on its name in the past. The Grand is the newest house, and the best

placed, the view from the windows being the finest in the town; indeed, few hotels can pretend to rival it. In front of the hotel is a broad white quay, beyond which flows the rapid stream with its bridges and islands, whence, in the summer, proceed the sounds of music and the flash of a hundred lights, while the steam-launches fly by, sometimes half a dozen in sight at the same time. These launches are one of the peculiarities of the town; they run at intervals from bank to bank, from point to point, this way, that, backwards, forwards, in and out, in the most confusing way in the world; in fact, it requires a considerable acquaintance with Stockholm before one becomes aware of all the short cuts which these little boats offer. There are some 300 of them attached to the service of the town, and very good ferry-boats they make. They are manned by a captain (a sailor who generally speaks English), an engineer, and a boy.

Before we entirely leave the subject of hotels, however, it is well to make one or two remarks. The price of a room is generally five kroner a night facing the water, four kroner for a room at the back or high up. *Table d'hôtés* are not the fashion in Swedish hotels, so dinner must be ordered *à la carte*. In dining you can always order one portion for two persons, but this should be distinctly stated when ordering each dish, as it is not the custom of the country, as in France; thus, two Swedes in ordering their dinners would order two dishes and two portions of each dish, where two Frenchmen would order three dishes and one portion of each; though, indeed, their one portion (in Sweden) is ample for two persons. With regard to the Swedish *cuisine*, of which we in England know so little, I would here say

that it fairly rivals the much vaunted *cuisine* of France of which we hear so much; and this I say, although the two *cuisines* have but few dishes in common, and well knowing that, the French *cuisine* being fashionable (or, as the vulgar say, 'all the go'), few will believe me. Still it is so, and those who doubt it have only to give the matter a trial; and above all, let them not forget the sweets, to which the ladies of Sweden are, by the way, particularly addicted; try, for instance, blandad compott or strutar med creme. The caviare, too, supplied in Sweden is remarkable, being the red caviare to which Izaak Walton refers.*

One more remark, and we will leave the hotel—the porter. English people have scarcely yet, I think, got to appreciate the importance of that many-sided man, the porter of to-day, a creature, I take it, of American origin. I am not speaking now of our old friend the beast of burden, the *homme de peine* of twenty years ago; no, I speak of the omniscient being who sits in his box by the door and works with his head, not with his hands; who knows everything, whether Madame A. is in or Herr B. out, the time the express goes or the passengers by the mail steamer may be expected in, what they 'give' at the opera, or whether you should rather go to the circus. What would the modern big hotel be without the porter? If you stay long, propitiate him with a 'something' in silver on account.

Let us go about the streets, for Stockholm is an eminently out-of-doors city; it requires, above all

* 'In Italy they make great profit of the spawn of carps by selling it to the Jews, who make it into red caviare, the Jews not being by their law admitted to eat of caviare made of the sturgeon, that being a fish that wants scales.'—Izaak Walton's *Complete Angler*.

things, fine weather. The town is chiefly remarkable for three things—the lovely excursions which we can take by steamer on its island-studded loch, its outdoor gardens with fine bands, and its charming Djurgården. With regard to the first of these, the islands are more than 1300 in number, and there is no end to the excursions which the porter at the hotel will best point out as the steamers constantly alter their hours of sailing. Secondly, the public gardens—public gardens with music and trees and lights, little tables for refreshments, and all the quiet out-door amusements John Bull so much loves abroad and will not tolerate at home. The chief of the gardens, and with the best band, is Berns garden in the Berzelius Park, close at the back of the Grand Hotel. The next, also close by, is Blanch garden, on the Kungsträdgård or central park. There is also the Strömparterre, a lovely garden on an island in the centre of the town down by the water; here there is a good *café*, but a poor band. Lastly there is Mosebacke up on the hill, in the old part of the town, which is the people's garden; the music here is poor, but the view around is magnificent, both before sunset and also at night, when the town lies below lit up with myriad lights. Perhaps, however, the most characteristic thing about Stockholm is the Djurgården, literally deer-garden, a place in the outskirts much frequented by all classes of the population. This Djurgården is the Champs Elysées of Stockholm; it is reached either by steam-launch or by tram-car, and is well provided with places of entertainment; it has a good restaurant—Hasselbachen—with a band and gardens attached, a circus, a small theatre, and a good-sized park; in fact, it is a public recreation-ground, on

Sundays and holidays a sort of fair, where the inhabitants in search of pleasure do chiefly congregate.

Besides these attractions in Stockholm there is little to see. The baths I have already mentioned: they are in many ways remarkable. There is a good court theatre or opera-house, one or two churches worth visiting, the King's palace, which is a show-place, and a museum not very remarkable in any way; in fact, it is to Nature quite as much as to man that Stockholm owes its attractions, being in this a striking contrast to Copenhagen.

While at Stockholm do not be beguiled into a visit to Upsala; it will be a day wasted, as there is nothing there worth seeing except the library—a library that it would take a lifetime rather than twelve hours to become acquainted with.

Leaving Stockholm, there are many routes back to England. The most used is that by train, fifteen hours to Malmö (pronounced Malme); from here the steamer takes you across in an hour to Copenhagen. Malmö has nothing of interest, and no one who has stopped there once would wish to do so again. Another route is by train to Christiania (eighteen hours), and so home, or through Norway; and there is still a third route, which to those who like the sea has many attractions, namely by steamer from Stockholm to Copenhagen. The steamers sail every Thursday morning, and arrive in Copenhagen the following Monday; they stop at various stations on the road, notably Wisby in the island of Gotland, and Kalmar and Karlskrona on the mainland; and as their object is to obtain cargo rather than passengers, they are not pressed for time; consequently passengers are almost invariably enabled to land and make some acquaintance with several curious

old towns not otherwise easily come-at-able. The commissariat department on these boats, as on most Swedish steamers, is remarkably well looked after. This route, then, by steamer to Copenhagen has many advantages provided the traveller has time at his disposal; it is cheap, it is almost unknown to English travellers, and it enables you to see more of the country than would be possible by railroad.

Leaving Sweden on our return, we reach Copenhagen. Copenhagen is a town which, unlike Stockholm, owes nothing to Nature and everything to man, and has many fine buildings well worth a visit. Few have not heard of Thorwaldsen's museum, and of the museum of Scandinavian antiquities, perhaps one of the best worth visiting in the world. The Opera-house, too, is magnificent, and is remarkable for the ballets given therein; these are not easily rivalled elsewhere, for the Danes are devoted to what the penny-aliners call the choregraphic art, and the managers of their places of entertainment have agents in the chief Spanish and Italian centres commissioned to secure the best talent; the Danes, however, do not like gymnastic performances, and the style of dancing in vogue here in England would not go down with them. Perhaps the greatest attraction of Copenhagen is (after Thorwaldsen) the Tivoli gardens, where the curious Montagne Russe provides endless amusement for strangers. These gardens at Copenhagen claim to be the largest of the sort in the world. The music (instrumental) is good, and the ballet-dancing sometimes excellent. The gardens are above all things respectable.

In Copenhagen there is but one hotel—the Angleterre; it has swamped all the others.

In leaving Copenhagen you have

two routes open, either by Korsöer and Kiel, about fourteen hours, mixed rail and steam, to Hamburg; or, again, you can go by steamer direct to Lubeck—a place, by the way, well worth a visit—and thence by train to Hamburg. The steamers by this latter route are Swedish boats (and again with good commissariat arrangements); they take about twelve hours to do the crossing, and arrive in Lubeck in the early morning. Here you will do well to deposit your baggage at an hotel and go on by the afternoon or evening train to Hamburg; by this you have ample time to see the town of Lubeck; the Marienkirche, with its 'Dance of Death' and curious clock, is worth a visit at twelve o'clock, and dinner at the cellars under the town-hall is good; here are to be obtained curious old hock and a fish of the Baltic called 'shlei.'

From Lubeck to Hamburg is but one hour by train. The Victoria Hotel on the Jungfernstieg and the Hôtel de l'Europe are perhaps the best. The city of Hamburg is one of the finest in the world. The coffee-rooms at the hotels here are badly arranged—smokers, diners, and persons devoted to literary pursuits (newspapers) being all mixed up together. Fortunately there are good restaurants, as, for instance, Korf's, between the Alster and the Exchange, and another at the Zoological Gardens. Visit also Blankenese on the Elbe, a lovely place in summer. From Hamburg there are steamers to England, or, if the travellers prefer it, another route by train to Bremen, also a lovely town, with a capital hotel—Hillman's—and a curious old town-hall with front of sculptured wood, and a remarkable old-world look about it. From Bremen the train will take you on to Harlingen, in

Holland, at the north of the Zuyder Zee. From here also there is a line of steamers to England; the boats, however, carry chiefly cattle. There is, moreover, another and preferable line of steamers which sail across the Zuyder Zee to Amsterdam. Harlingen is a wretched town; and the traveller by this route will find it best to leave Bremen in the morning, sleep at Leeuwarden, where there is a small, though clean, hotel, and take the morning train on for Harlingen, whence the boat for Amsterdam sails on the arrival of the train at 10 A.M. Leeuwarden is a place somewhat remarkable on account of the peculiar addiction of the female portion of the

inhabitants for headdresses of burnished gold, to which are attached heavy projecting ornaments in the shape of pendants, these latter being studded with garnets, rubies, and frequently diamonds.

On reaching Amsterdam we are again within 'measurable distance' of England; and here we must take our leave, merely adding that the journey, or tour, can be done in about thirty days taking it easily, and will cost from thirty to forty pounds, according as the traveller is extravagant or not. As to the time of year, the earlier the better, July or August for choice. September in Sweden is considered late; boats cease to run, and winter sets in.

THE DISCOVERY OF A NEW WATERING-PLACE.

On a certain date—it matters not precisely to say when—I made the discovery of a new watering-place. It might have been thought that in the present year of grace such a discovery would have been simply impossible. To such a remark I have nothing to oppose but a simple narrative of plain unvarnished facts. Its secret is an open secret. The existence of the watering-place is known to a considerable number of persons, and without such knowledge, indeed, a place would have no existence as a watering-place. But we had much rather not talk about it. We make it a rule, like Mnemosyne, to lay the finger on the lip. We have no wish that it should be overcrowded. We had rather that the fact of its existence should not be published, for that would probably put up prices, and deprive us of all the chief advantages of retirement. We like to be cheap, primitive, healthy; 'and for goodness' sake, whatever you do, do not talk about it,' is a remark which is occasionally heard.

In the public interests, however, a public writer has no choice in such matters. He comes, he sees, he writes. There is no help for it. I had often heard of Southern-down, both directly and indirectly, and it was in the Fates that I should discover it. I have now visited it on several occasions, and proceed, as simply as may be, to sum up my impressions. To proceed to it you have first to get to Bridgend, a little town between Cardiff and Swansea. I own that I was not very hopeful of anything that might turn

up between Cardiff and Swansea. What one sees from the line is not very promising. The shores are flat. You pass some pretty well-wooded dells, and then you are again in the flatness, looking out on the side nearest the sea. One hears a great deal of the industries of South Wales, which are of course very laudable, but to the tourist somewhat monotonous and disagreeable. One sees that on the other side of the line there is a noble mountainous country. But it is penetrated with railways, and abounds with the smokeless anthracite coal which is now so generally used in the navies of the world. You may go up to any height in the chimneys and down to any depths in the coal-pits. On first thoughts it was not quite easy to realise where this new watering-place might be—this region of freshness and wildness and beauty. The only specific direction which I have is that I should stop at Bridgend. There is no regular refreshment-room at Bridgend station; but there are two fruit-stalls, and the fruits are pretty and plenteous. I try to lash myself into a temporary enthusiasm about Bridgend, although I am forced to own that, from a Social Science point of view, it is somewhat disfigured by the number of beer-shops. I observe with approbation that there is a magnificent public fountain, which speaks highly for the public spirit of the locality. On approaching it closely, however, I observe—first, that it is carefully railed off as a sacred and forbidden thing;

secondly, that there is no trough for cattle; thirdly, that the taps are so high that thirsty little children cannot drink; fourthly, that there are no cups; fifthly, that there is no water. I come to the conclusion that I have wasted a good deal of fine feeling upon the gushing fountains of Bridgend, and that I had better make the best of my way to Southerndown. Then the question arises, How am I to get to Southerndown? Is there a railway? Certainly not. Is there a coach or omnibus? Certainly not. It appears, however, that there is a carriage-road, and you may hire a trap, the distance being about six miles. Or you may go a few miles along the road, and then turn to the right, and follow the telegraph-poles across the downs till you come to the village. Or you may make a still longer *détour*, which will take you a pleasant path in a ravine between hills, and then cross a picturesque river, the Ogwy, and so come out near the sea. I have tried all these ways, and it would be hard to say which is the pleasantest and most picturesque. On the present occasion I determine to follow the telegraph-poles, and never to forsake them unless it is impossible to miss your way and there is an obvious gain of ground. One is thankful that there are telegraph-poles. One may embrace them, if one is so disposed. They are the only obvious links between the civilisation we are forsaking and the *terra incognita*, the Ultima Thule, towards which we tend.

I pass over two bridges, two streams. Bridgend is probably so called because there is no end of bridges. Also there is a set of raised planks, for what seemed, without being so, a quarter of a mile, hinting at perils of floods which an adventurous discoverer

may have to encounter. Then we come upon the telegraph-poles, and prepare to follow the wires. The downs come to the very verge of the highway. It is a somewhat steep ascent; but there are a number of natural steps in the turf, and we are on the very downs. We do not go far, but we are sensible of a great difference. Ah! ah! What is this? Like a war-horse I scent the breeze. I feel, I see something that is worth coming for. Here is a prospect of rolling downs, of the wild fresh moorlands. Beneath is the road winding like a stream between the woods and the downs. Presently I scent the ozone and iodine of the sea. Presently also the 'great water of the west,' here some thirty miles broad, stretches, a burnished shield, before us. We seem to be just opposite Porlock, that 'haven under the hill,' the Devonian combes alternately so beautifully shadowed or sunlit; and farther west, if we are only sure that we have caught them aright, are Lynton and Ilfracombe. In one direction the coast is rocky with imposing cliffs, and then it gently subsides to an open beach. On a down that rises on the other side, nobly placed, with a background of woods and park, dotted with sheep and deer, is Lord Dunraven's interesting home. So far as the first view of things goes, this view is simply superb.

We get into the town—only there is no town. There are simply a few houses dotted here, and another few dotted there. We go to the principal hotel, which looks promising, only practically there is no hotel. We ask for rooms, but they are all engaged. We will dine in the coffee-room. But there is no coffee-room. The whole house is let to lodgers. Where is the church? There is no church. The chapel, then? There is no chapel. 'Can

you oblige me with a glass of water? I ask a cottager. There is no water. At least there is only rain-water, collected in tubs and cisterns. A few places, but they are only a few, have wells sunk. Where are the shops? There are no shops. I beg pardon, there is a shop for groceries, green and dry. But the butcher's, the grocer's, the draper's, the poulterer's, the stationer's, *et hoc genus omne* — all, all are conspicuous by their absence. It is unnecessary to say a single word about such luxurious trifles as gas and sanitation. We get to a cottage and secure a couple of rooms. Then we ask for the bill. There is no bill. 'Indeed, indeed,' said the honest Welshwoman, 'I should be sorry to charge you too much. Will you please make out your own bill, or give us anything you think right?'

Is this place empty? On the contrary, it is quite full. We went to place after place before we could get these two rooms. A clergyman is to be here next Sunday. He sends round a friendly message that he proposes to give a service that evening at the one big room of the place, school-room, or literary institution, or mixture of the two. It is a big room, and it is filled from end to end.

The place is full of mysteries. There are a lot of people; but where do they come from? And what do they come for? Further impressions only deepen the self-evident facts which allure, magnet-like, to Southerndown. There is this noble prospect; fine bathing, wonderful air, bracing, restorative; a most thoroughly unconventional mode of life, seclusion, cheapness. I am of opinion that Southerndown, with all its drawbacks, was worth discovering, and I claim the honour of being the first English discoverer — at least the first who, by these

presents, makes the place known to the English people.

The social aspect of the neighbourhood sufficiently explains the peculiar conditions under which Southerndown exists. It is the first, the easiest, the most natural, the most healthy outlet for a considerable part of the busiest districts of South Wales. The Welsh have, of course, their beautiful and fashionable watering-places of Tenby and Aberystwith, whose population we occasionally increase; but Southerndown is much more handy and inexpensive. The Swansea people have the beautiful Gower district close at hand, with the quaint Flemish population, with such lovely bays as those of Caswall and Oxwich. But for the people of Cardiff, and for the mining people above the seaboard among the hills, Southerndown is just the locality indicated. I do not say that there is a crowd of excursionists, such as sometimes perfectly floods the streets of Tenby and other watering-places. The six miles' walk from Bridgend forms an effective barrier against such inundations. I do not at all object to the occasional vanload of children and young people that in holiday time make their appearance on the downs above the sea. But any one who understands what a plague of excursionists there may be will be glad that his favourite haunts are left undisturbed. There is another place called Porthcawl, to which the railway runs from Bridgend, which draws aside the mining population from Southerndown. Porthcawl is indeed quite a sanatorium for working men; it is also a business place, and quotes a frightful amount of statistics of coal and 'pig iron' exported. Southerndown might almost be called a marine suburb of Cardiff. The Cardiff man, wearied with his six days' hard work, is

glad to get away from Saturday to Monday. Sometimes he is well content to spend here the whole of his hardly-won vacation. Cardiff has a remarkable development. It has doubled its population within the last ten years. But although it boasts both a castle and a cathedral, it is essentially a *bourgeois* place, a place of boundless activity and competition, a place where the stress and strain of life appear to be peculiarly heavy, so far as an outsider is competent to judge. So the man of business, or overwrought professional man, from the seaport, or from the hill district which is related to the seaport, come down here, almost at times with a kind of unconscious instinct, seeking the bracing restorative influences of the downs and the open sea.

When visitors come down here they come as if for a picnic, and sometimes the preparations are so considerable that the commissariat department might almost victual a fortress. You may get most things at Bridgend, if your order is sufficiently large to make it worth an honest tradesman's while to send the half dozen miles. Anything special you have to bring down from Cardiff. So occasionally you may see huge hampers and boxes of provisions; wines, lobsters, groceries, fish, flesh, fowl, and dessert. There are some persons who think a visit to the seaside incomplete without the adjunct of abundant eating and drinking. But it is not a bad plan to take the provisions of the place you visit, and if they fall short, plain fare is after all the wholesomest. At Southerndown you can always make sure of bread, butter, eggs, milk, and scraggy poultry, and there seems to be an abundant supply of mineral waters, which is as well, as the natural fountains are non-existent. You cannot sup-

ply any deficiencies of raiment, and being a seaside place it is obviously unreasonable for you to expect any fish; all luxuries are entirely tabooed.

The place is not so much as mentioned in some of the best guide-books. One writer, indeed, speaks of the scenery 'degenerating into frequent reaches of dreary sand hillocks, alternating with a rocky shore;' but he proceeds to add, 'everywhere enclosing an inland region of rich pasture diversified with dingles, glades, and woodland, and abounding with old parish churches and home-steads, monastic ruins and crosses, that would enrich the portfolios of the artist and the pages of the novelist.' I look upon this rounded period with a kind of admiring despair. The author strikes one as the kind of man who would prefer the rhymed couplet to the ode or the hexameter, and has probably a respect for mountains only so far as they may be serviceable to the plains. The 'dreary sand hillocks' are a decided exaggeration. These are to be found in combination with springing turf and pleasant paths. And over the soil stretch the immeasurable heavens, 'broken up into their highest,' and the fresh life-giving breezes race over the expanse, the winds of the ocean meeting the winds of the moorlands. You must love Nature in its simplest, most integral, most intense forms, before you have anything to do in coming to such a place as Southerndown for a holiday.

The chief advantage of such a place as this is, that to a peculiar degree it flings you upon your own resources. There is no concert or promenade or assembly of any kind. There is no gossip. There is nothing to dress for. There is very little society. Unless you bring your own society with you

there is none. You are thrown upon yourself and upon Nature, and surely these ought to be sufficient for a time. Here are grassy lanes green as a forest arcade; you may bathe in the sea and dress in its caves; you may sit beneath the shadow of the rock, and watch the infinite play of the channel sea between Glamorganshire and Devonshire. This is just the place where you should come down and think out some knotty problem. Here, too, you may come with a parcel of books, something heavy for the clear mornings and light and pleasant for the afternoons. Here, too, is the exact region where 'friends in council' may wander together, and look on all subjects on all sides with a largeness of discourse which is impossible in those quarters of an hour in which we ordinarily exchange conventional remarks. If you are skilful with pencil or palette there is many a point which will well repay the artist's pleasant toil—the bridge over the Ogwy river, the remote country churches, the mill, the ravine, the cottage, the ruined castle with the solitary keep or old crumbling walls. In a place like Southerndown the institution of society is almost broken up into its original elements. You fall back, as far as may be, upon the primeval state. For instance, you can't call a basket-carriage or get saddle-horses. You fall back upon the horse such as the good bishop gave Richard Hooker—to wit, a stout staff or a Shanks's mare. I fully agree with Bishop Stillingfleet, who wrote about the amusements of the clergy, and recommends walking as the best kind of amusement, which is, of course, equally good for the laity. Both physically and metaphysically you ventilate yourself in walking. When it is said that the power of speaking is that of

thinking upon your legs, I put the saying into the form that you think and converse best when you are turning your legs to account in walking. This, too, is the age of baths—earth-baths, vapour-baths, mud-baths, sea-baths, &c. At Southerndown you have the full advantages of the sea-bath and the air-bath in the highest perfection.

Shall we talk a little bit about our neighbourhood? And what kind of talk shall it be, in accordance with the necessary limitations of a mere sojourn in these regions? There is no place which you can visit, especially in this crowded country of ours, which will not yield ample material for investigation and discussion. There are the social aspects, the industrial, the historical, the archæological, the literary, and so on. Southerndown will only yield us a *morceau* here and there; but I believe that the entire florilegium will be deserving respect. Just as you see all over the country the primitive landscape struggling with the invading industrial powers, so you will find pleasant primitive dwelling-places and unsophisticated scenery and the old county families in sharp antithesis with the *nouveaux riches* and their mines. I have read an interesting chapter on the extinct families of Glamorganshire. So long ago as old Fuller's time it was known that the descendants of royalty might be found among the poor, and how the very poorest, in the alternations of the wheel, have climbed to the top.

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel, and lower the proud.

Smile, and we smile—the lords of many lands;

Frown, and we smile—the lords of our own hands.'

In Wales every family claims affinity with a British prince, or at least with a Welsh bard. Many

of them, in addition to a Christian name, affect the luxury of a bardic name. They tell us that the Welsh ancestors of Oliver Cromwell come from Glamorganshire. The 'Monk' Lewis, who was the first husband of the late Lady Beaconsfield, was a Glamorganshire man, the Lewises of Green Meadow; and I have found traditions of an early visit which Disraeli made to the neighbourhood of Cardiff. Then the Welsh people are very fond of history; which, so far as the locality is concerned, is the more remarkable, as South Wales has, for the most part, been so happy as to possess very little history. They always make a point of beginning with the British history, and in due order proceed to the Roman, the Saxon, the Norman, the English. They have the agreeable theory that whoever invaded them always came eventually to a bad end. I have never been able to discover in the 'British' period anything beyond a variety of indistinct traditions, except that they belonged to the Silures, who long fought against the Romans. When the Conqueror conquered England, his hands were too full to occupy themselves behind the Welsh marshes. Some generations later the Normans came—Fitzhamon, afterwards Earl of Gloucester, and his knight, William of London; and it is not difficult to show the continuity of history from the Norman times to the present. The archaeologists, however, have brought together a number of interesting facts, which, being investigated and interpreted, yield a very fine hypothetical history, just as Professor Owen's solitary bone served to elaborate the whole extinct bird. It is not a bad plan to investigate our neighbourhood in company with some Archaeological or Natural Science Association;

or, say, with some picnic-parties, into which, indeed, all the learned societies seem ultimately to dissolve.

There is a place called Newton Nottage, of which a local antiquary has written an account, discussing its antiquities—British circles, barrows, and Celtic and Roman remains, a Medusa face, coins, &c., which make it probable that Via Julia passed this way. Here, then, we get some distinct ground to stand upon. We should be able to put together some Roman history in addition to the British, *i.e.* the native Welsh chapter. Then the geologists have a very important suggestion to make in reference to the neighbourhood of Southerndown. It is argued that the immense South Wales coal-basin, mainly in Glamorganshire, whose cuttings go twice as deep as any other cuttings in the country, may extend to the very coast-line. Underneath the lias there may be treasures of coal that may keep us warm until the sun burns out, which philosophers tell us he is bound to do within a measurable date. But above everything else this neighbourhood is rich in ruined castles and abbeys. South Wales is beyond any regions I know for castles and for caverns. Old Samuel Johnson appreciated most highly the ruined castles of Wales. Let us begin at the beginning—that is to say, with the one immediately in front of us.

Dunraven Castle is the proper Castle of Southerndown. Its position is an imposing one. It is on a promontory, lofty and rocky; by its side a little stream hurries down to meet the tide, and there are large and curious caves partly excavated in the adjacent cliffs. It is a modern castle; but, like other Welsh castles, it occupies the site of a very ancient structure. Its early Welsh name was Dindryfar;

and tradition has it that it was the chief palace of the ancient kings of Wales, and more especially of the renowned Caractacus. That worthy antiquary, Dr. Thomas Nicholas, acutely argues that Caractacus must have lived somewhere, and why should he not have lived at Dindryfar? The place is courteously shown to strangers, and the conservatories are very pretty; but it is to be regretted that Lord Dunraven himself is so great an absentee. The place belonged for two generations to the family of Sir Arnold Butler, a servant of that William 'de Londres' whom we have mentioned, until it terminated in an heiress, when it came into the hands of the Vaughans; and a certain Vaughan, 'losing his three sons by an untimely death by drowning,' sold the place to one Humphrey Wyndham, and a Wyndham of Dunraven eventually took a peerage 'of that ilk.' Coity Castle also belongs, we believe, to Lord Dunraven. The word simply means the 'woodland house,' or the house in the woods. Welsh names are full of music and poetry. Ewenny Abbey is a place that well deserves a visit. It was attached to the great Abbey of St. Peter's at Gloucester; and it is probably from this that some considerable patronage in Glamorganshire belongs to the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester. A little stream of the same name here enters the Ogmors. The monastery itself is a ruin; the aisles and north transept have disappeared, but the nave is still used as a place of worship. It was founded by the Benedictines soon after the conquest of Glamorgan in the middle of the twelfth century; and the architecture is of course in the early Norman style. The stone has stood the wear and tear of seven centuries wonderfully well;

the angularities are still sharp; the joints close and regular; the lofty wall, that had strong tower defences, took a wide circuit, embracing the whole of the buildings. A portion of the terrace-walls still exists, mantled with ivy; there is still the gateway, with tower and portcullis; the great central tower is stern and massive, sustained by enormous buttresses; and beneath the southern tower there was once—if it has not now been filled up—a deep narrow grated dungeon, the prisoners being let down through the grating. The ancient Ewenny has become a modern residence, just as Morgan Abbey, the most interesting of old abbeys, has become one of the most sumptuous of modern residences. I am always sad and vexed when I come from visiting ancient abbeys—I was visiting a very famous one quite recently—from this reason: there are two heavy Bills which we have to pay every year, and from which the forfeited ecclesiastical property might have saved us—the Education Bill and the Poor Law Bill. There was no begging in the time of the monasteries, except at the monasteries themselves; but within not many years after their dissolution, some seventy thousand beggars were put to death. If England had been an educated country for the last three centuries, instead of one of the most ignorant, so far as the mass of population is concerned; and if the compulsory charity of the Poor Law had been liberated for purposes of public and private beneficence, I think that far higher results might have been shown.

Turning from the abbeys to the castles, go to the Ogwy river, within a couple of miles of Southern-down. You come to the Ogmoor stream, and hard by are the remains, such as they are, of Ogmoor or Ogor Castle, 'an ancient

place of strength.' There is a still better walk over finer cliffs to a more famous castle. St. Donat's Castle is on a small creek washed by the tide. The walls of the ancient deer-park, of vast extent, still survive. It is generally considered one of the most perfect of the old baronial halls of Wales. The present edifice is mainly modern, though some remains of earlier structures may be embedded in the present buildings. It was the ancient home of the Stradlings, who continued here for six hundred years. In the time of Henry VI. we are told that Sir Edward Stradling, returning from Jerusalem, 'brought with him from Italy a man skilful in carving, who made the ornamental columns to be seen in St. Donat's Castle.' There is a ms. history known to antiquaries which says that a certain Sir John Stradling, in the time of James I., 'made the new park and planted it with trees; he planted also many there in the old park, and rebuilt in a great measure the old tower which was blown down by a tremendous storm in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when many of the old trees in the park were blown down.' It has now passed into the possession of a gentleman who knows how to appreciate and develop whatever is best in his domain. At this point, however, we must draw the line, and not proceed further with the *catalogue raisonné* of the resources of the neighbourhood. Indeed, this is a kind of employment which every tourist or visitor ought to take in hand for himself. He will find how the local history becomes part and parcel of the general history, how isolated facts serve as an induction for general laws, how he cannot adequately study any section of our country without being helped to understand and love the fatherland all the better.

The watering-place I have discovered is eminently favourable for that 'high thinking and low feeding' which the Philistines deride, but which the disciples of 'culture' agree in praising. There is at least comparative or utter freedom from vice and frivolity—though such things will penetrate even into the Valley of Rasselas—so far as these are the ordinary constituents of a watering-place. The mental and moral health, as well as the physical, are surely benefited by the large prospects, the liberal air, the splendour of rising and setting suns.

'Here I feel amends—
The breath of heaven, fresh blowing, pure
and sweet.'

I certainly think that there are improvements of which my watering-place is susceptible. I should like a good hotel, after the fashion of other hotels. As Dr. Johnson truly observed—it is a somewhat hackneyed quotation—the finest prospect is improved by a good hotel in the background. I don't want many shops—the fewer perhaps the better—but still shops for absolute necessities. There should be no time lost in getting a proper water supply. There was some rumour in the air about a railway; but I trust that it will be a long time before a terminus alters, and perhaps mars, the unique charm of the little watering-place. I hope that it will be still longer before the coal-fields are opened up and the watering-place becomes a port. At any rate, I have a vision of the Southerndown of the future with its terraces and esplanades, but it will scarcely be the Southerndown which I have known and loved for these many years. I am quite sure that, however splendid its visionary future, it will show no improvement on the old times and the old friends of now distant years.

MY LADY GOLDENHAIR.

(With an Illustration.)

THE great sea shone like a shield of gold,
Shimmered and glistened everywhere,
The lazy ripples swept fold on fold
To the skirts of my Lady Goldenhair.

The summer stayed for a little space,
The stars made silver the warm night air,
And all for love of the lovely face
Of her I call Lady Goldenhair.

The waves they sparkled 'neath beam and breath
Of golden sunshine and golden air ;
And all the foam-flowers, white as death,
Envied the flush of her cheek so fair !

What has come to the world to-day !
Something beautiful, rich, and rare ;
Only a smile, like a warm sun-ray,
From lips of my Lady Goldenhair.

We stood by the great salt waves, and spoke
A thousand nothings ; yet here and there
A deeper sound from my heart-strings broke,
And rhymed its music to Goldenhair.

The sand, the foam, the arched blue sky,
And all the wonderful world so fair ;
Ah, I shall think of that hour till I die,
For sake of my Lady Goldenhair.

The crown, the blossom of all that's best,
None in the world may with her compare ;
Who will win her, whose life be blest
With love of my Lady Goldenhair ?

Who ? I think of her tender words,
Falling across my own despair,
Sweet as the summer to weary birds ;
Ah, and she pities me—Goldenhair !

If ever I thought she was cold and proud,
Scornful of sorrow she could not share ;
If ever with aching heart I vowed
To shun the glamour of Goldenhair :

I never will do her such wrong again
For all of sorrow my life may bear ;
Her smile will lessen to lighter pain,
And haunt and gladden me everywhere.

RITA.

A DAY ON SHORE IN THE FARÖE ISLANDS.

I do not intend to make the following account of a little ramble the excuse for a long dissertation on the government, political value, history, or a lot of dry statistics, &c., about the Faröe Islands. I must refer any readers who may wish for such to an encyclopædia or gazetteer. Suffice it to say that the Faröes are a number of islands—twenty-two, I believe—lying nearly half-way between Scotland and Iceland; that is to say, about 350 miles north-west of Wick.

It was on an August afternoon that I first saw the Faröes. I may say that Faröe Islands is a tautological expression, as the name Faröe is a combination of two Danish words, 'far' and 'öe,' meaning 'distant island.' I shall, therefore, call them in this sketch by the single word Faröe. My friend and I were passengers on board the Danish postal steamer, which runs during the summer months from Copenhagen to Reykjavik in Iceland, touching at either Granton or Lerwick on two or three of her voyages. She was a regular old tub, the *Diana* by name, and had been once, so I was proudly informed by the captain, a gun-boat. I am sure that if being nearly as broad as long, and with a most perverse disposition to roll or pitch in every conceivable direction, constitutes a good feature in a gun-boat, she ought to be placed again in the active servicesquadron. She was never easy; for when everything was apparently calm she would give some crazy lurch that defied all calculation as to pre-

serving one's balance. We had been keeping a sharp look-out for the first signs of land on the horizon, and at about four o'clock P.M. it was sighted. All available glasses were of course brought to bear on the faint little gray lump, which, after some studying of charts, &c., we were informed was Suderöe (*Anglicè*, South Island). Very soon we were able to distinguish other elevations, and gradually these took definite shapes and positions; for, although I had a good glass, such were the peculiar movements of the ship, that I used to get a glimpse of something I thought might be land, when I found myself intently gazing on space and several points out of the right direction. However, this very fact enabled me to see and draw the others' attention to a whale, or rather the jet of water which every now and then spouted up.

We passed within a few miles of Suderöe and Fleesørne, then we skirted two rocky islands known as the Great and Little Dimons. These were very rugged desolate-looking objects; in fact, they are uninhabited, and landing is only possible in very calm weather, and then with great difficulty. After passing one or two others, we headed our course up a sort of strait between two rather more cultivated ones. There were no trees on any, but we could perceive that the ground bore traces of husbandry, so we naturally supposed we were nearing the habitations of fellow-creatures. Our surmise was correct, for on rounding

a slight promontory we found ourselves opposite a number of wooden houses massed together like a struggling crowd coming downstairs, where every one wants to get to the bottom, but at the same time does not wish to tumble to it. The goal in this instance appeared to be the sea in two little rocky bights or bays. Really some of the houses in the front seemed in imminent danger of being pushed into the water by the crowd higher up and behind.

This was Thorshavn, the capital of the Farøes, and boasting a population of some one thousand inhabitants.

Amidst considerable dipping of ensigns between the Diana, the custom-house, and the fort, we cast anchor just opposite the town, and about two hundred yards from the shore. The steamer had hardly swung round to her moorings, when we saw rather a smart-looking boat coming towards us, rowed by six or eight—I forget which—sailors in uniform. This boat contained the Sysselmand, who is an official under the Governor of the Farøes. He came on board by some steps that had been lowered, and, after rather a demonstrative greeting with the captain, retired with him to his cabin, there, I suppose, to receive the mail and any government despatches that there might be. After this official business had been gone through, our passengers for Thorshavn were landed, with the exception of three English tourists, who decided to stay on board until next morning, as the Diana was not leaving until the following day. It was a beautiful evening, and quite warm. The sun had set behind the island, leaving us and our ship in the shadow of the hills. There was something very delightful in this clear northern atmosphere. I have

lain under the olives about Mentone, and under the orange-trees at Sorrento, smoking to keep the insects off, and dividing my time between a novel and watching the green lizards chasing each other up and down the trunks, or lazily basking on the warm stones; I have thrown myself down under the giant firs on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada, thoroughly tired out after a hard day's bear-tracking, and thought what a delightful couch old Mother Earth could make. But this evening, as we lay or sat about on the deck of the Diana, looking up at a lovely Aurora Borealis, now fading, now brightening, ever changing, with a background of deepest blue studded with stars, was a new experience to me, and one, I think, not soon forgotten. This air and scene had a charm peculiarly its own; so exhilarating, and yet so calm and still.

Amongst our passengers was an Icelandic parson, who spoke English very fairly. He was capital company, and could give us a lot of information. His journey had been rather an eventful one; for originally he had sailed from Reykjavik, intending to visit some relatives on the east coast of Iceland, where the Diana touched on her homeward voyage to Copenhagen. However, when the vessel arrived off the fjord there was such a heavy gale blowing, that the captain would not venture running in, as the channel was narrow and full of rocks; so, after lying off for nearly twenty-four hours, he decided to leave and continue the voyage. Our friend, the pastor, as we called him, was compelled to make up his mind to spend his holiday on board ship and at Copenhagen instead of amongst his Icelandic friends.

The captain told us that as he intended coaling next day, we

might go on shore and consider the whole day at our disposal. Under these circumstances we arranged to walk over the hills to the other side of the island, where there were the remains of an old church or abbey called Kirkabye. After breakfast we went ashore in a filthy boat with high points at both stem and stern. The oars in these boats are not placed between rowlocks, but in a sort of leather sling. There were no seats except what the rowers sat upon, and in the bottom of the boat there were two or three inches of nasty black-looking water, which, like all such ballast, went rolling about with the movement of the craft, necessitating us to continually lift our feet up or get a dose of it over our boot-tops. After bumping against the landing-place, we staggered up some slimy rocks, and found ourselves in a kind of government store. This was the custom-house, but, as it was also the only shop in Thorshavn, it was the rendezvous for a lot of the inhabitants, and ragged dirty fellows they were. The men are unshaven, and I should say brushes and combs are unknown luxuries in the Farøes. On their heads they wear a cotton or coarse woollen cap, generally red or blue, but sometimes striped. It is very like an old-fashioned man's night-cap, the point or bob hanging down on one side. The Norwegians have a similar head-gear, and I have seen sailors on private yachts sometimes with a cap very like it, only, of course, cleaner and newer. Their trousers in most cases only reached to their knees, or very little below, the lower part having apparently dropped off by degrees, leaving a sort of fringe, but no one could mistake it for an ornament. We saw no women, and on mentioning

this were informed that they were all at work, either in the fields or at their homes. We were able to verify this statement during our walk inland.

We pushed our way up a sort of alley, which was the main street of this flourishing capital. It was from six to twelve feet wide, but varied frequently, as the street had evidently been made as a passage between the houses, and not the latter built to it. Sometimes a house faced it, but this was exceptional: they abutted at all angles, sometimes presenting a side, sometimes a corner, and not unfrequently showing their total contempt for the thoroughfare by nothing but a back-door or rubbish yard. We laboured up this paved way (O yes, it was paved! with boulders varying in size from a hen's egg to a pumpkin, and somewhat similar in shape to—everything). Besides doing duty as a street, I fancy it must have been the main sewer; if so, I will give it credit for having 'fall' enough, as in some places it was like going up steps. Our attention was drawn, both by sight and smell, to a number of dark-looking objects, very like long black stockings, hanging in rows all round the various huts or houses. The stench was fearful, so bad that we had to make frequent use of our brandy flasks. On inquiry, we learnt that the inhabitants had, about a fortnight previously, made a splendid catch of whales, and that these black affairs consisted of flesh that was being dried, and which would constitute nearly the entire animal food of the people during winter.

On emerging from the town we rapidly ascended the hillside. The road was little more than a sheep-track, for the Farøese, like the Icelanders, have no carts. The

crops (barley and hay) are carried from the fields on the backs of either ponies or oxen. The women were busy at work in the fields: some were delving, whilst others were guiding the plough. All had their faces closely covered with a cloth like the Turkish ladies, but not for the same reason. These Farøese women's skin appears to be very sensitive (notwithstanding its coating of dirt) to the direct rays of the sun—and the sun can be hot in these islands, as we found out after toiling up and down hill for six or eight hours. As the shortest day in winter is only about four hours, and during the summer months there are frequent and sometimes continuous fogs, the inhabitants are much more liable to feel the effects of the sun in clear summer weather such as this day was. Their ploughs are very primitive affairs, drawn by oxen or an ox and a pony. They consist of a heavy piece of wood sharpened like a wedge in front, with another piece driven into the top to guide it, and altogether rather like the rudder of a canal barge. The furrows were neither straight, nor was any depth of soil turned up. The low-lying land is swampy, and where the water does not run off naturally, no system of drainage seems to be adopted. On the hillsides the soil is very thin and poor, the rocks continually cropping out above the surface. We soon found that the name of this island was appropriate, as from its number of brooks and rivulets it is called Strömøe.

Up hill and down dale we plodded on, sometimes over boot-tops in a peaty sort of bog, then scrambling over loose stones on a hillside, and then over a nice stretch of moorland. We arrived at our destination about noon. Just before we came to the farm-

house where we intended to rest and get what refreshment we could, we passed a very curious water-mill, which was used to crush grain. The mill is built over a mountain stream, in which, when I was there, there was a tolerable quantity of water, although we were informed that in winter it was a perfect torrent. When the mill is required the water is allowed to rush down two wooden troughs, impinging in its course against a number of flat spokes fixed into two upright axles. The rush of water against these spokes causes two circular stones to revolve in opposite directions in the covered hut above. Between these the grain passes, and is ground. It is a very primitive contrivance, and had a most dangerously top-heavy and propped-up appearance. The farmer gave us a most hearty welcome, and his wife cooked some trout for us beautifully. After our meal we turned out to examine the ruins. They consisted of four exterior walls built of stone, pierced by long Gothic arched windows. No traces of a roof remain. The east window, or rather the opening, appeared to have been ornamented, as there were a few roughly-carved projections remaining on the inner side of the arch. In the wall under this window was inserted a slab, on which, in bas-relief, was a representation of the Crucifixion. There were three figures, which were in a fair state of preservation, although very rude in design and cut; and at no time could it have had much claim to notice as a work of art. The abbey—which, by the way, is now used as a sheep-pen—was built about the twelfth century, and was formerly the seat of the ecclesiastical government of the Farøes. The head church—which,

of course, is Lutheran—is now at Thorshavn, and is a structure built of wood, and totally devoid of any architectural beauty.

On returning to Thorshavn we called at the Sysselmand's house, which, like all the others, was built entirely of wood; but the rooms were comfortably furnished, and the walls hung with prints and engravings. Amongst others we noticed the Crystal Palace, York Minster, the Crown Prince of Denmark, &c. He gave us a very interesting account of the way the inhabitants had captured a school of whales about a fortnight previously. When the whales are seen, all the boats in the place are manned and rowed out to seaward of the school, which, by noise and splashing, is driven up one of the straits into some bay or *cul-de-sac*, where they are at once set upon by the people in the boats with a sort of spear, not unlike what we use for cutting hedges. Armed with these weapons, they

cut and slash in every direction; whilst those on shore haul the huge carcasses up the rocks or beach with ropes. There had been four or five hundred taken, and the value of the oil was estimated at some three thousand pounds. The capture in this instance had taken place in the two little inlets on the shores of which Thorshavn is built. In consequence of this slaughter we were cautioned not to bathe, as several sharks had been seen, which had evidently been attracted to the place by the blood. Opposite Thorshavn lies the island of Naalsøe—presumably so called because the sea has excavated a tunnel right through the southern point of it, a distance of perhaps two hundred yards. We returned to our ship on hearing the signal-gun fired, after a most charming walk, and soon found ourselves once more *en route* for Iceland and the North.

T. L. W.

THE REMEDY.

(*With an Illustration.*)

'ALL my heart is burnt, believe me,
By the anger in your eyes ;
Dearest, let a smile relieve me
Quickly, or your lover dies.'

Thus he pleaded, scorned and flouted,
Lying midst the tangled bloom ;
Whilst his Sacharissa pouted,
Darkening the leafy gloom.

Still he pleaded, poet, lover ;
But she never answered word :
Only wild bees hum above her,
'That was all the sound he heard.

Still he pleaded ; but she never
Deigned her swain a single look :
Only kept her eyes fixed ever
On the rushy-fringed brook :

Till at last she raised them, smiling,
As but morn and woman can—
Surely all her past beguiling
Should have warned that wretched man !

'If,' quoth she, 'my eyes' fierce glances,
If their scorching beams you blame ;
If each look your pain enhances,
If your heart is all aflame,

Quench it quickly,' and she pointed,
With a dainty hand of cream,
Where, midst tall reeds, many-jointed,
Sped the cool and crystal stream.

JAMES MEW.





A SURE SHOT.

An Irish Story of the Present Hour.

I.

THEY had been engaged for years, but difficulties had not daunted hope, nor dimmed the steady light of a heartfelt affection.

Hugh Carolan was poor—a crime of grave magnitude. Yet, as it had attached itself to him with a legacy of debt from his father, it might have been more leniently dealt with. Honora, indeed, viewed it in the light of a heroism, taken in conjunction with his struggles and his fortitude. Naturally, however, her father, Colonel Wylde, had more worldly astuteness. He himself was the proprietor of considerable estates in the County F——. He had a sagacious agent, and everything prospered with him. His neighbour, young Carolan, had nominal claim to almost as fair a rent-roll; and if he could not make this good, there must be a blunder somewhere, which the mind of a military man was not called upon to ignore. Hugh Carolan seldom found himself now as an invited guest at Killavel House; and if its owner, Godfrey Wylde, could have believed he had the power to make his daughter break with him, he would have been prompt to exercise it. But she, with a sweet gentleness of air, had deep and abiding feelings. Her outward form, touched by the most tender and womanly grace, was scarce an index to a nature which was at once strong and sensitive.

* * * *

The morning hour is not always
HOLIDAY, '82.

filled with freshness. The dreamy impress of the night is sometimes left upon it; and that faintness of life recently prevalent and felt has not wholly passed at the touch of wakefulness.

Honora Wylde entered the breakfast-room at Killavel House on a September morning which had the gravity of autumn, and her step was instinctively languid. Dressed in a soft fabric of a creamy shade, the tint of her skin exactly harmonised with that of her garb. But a little pink showed in her delicately oval cheek; and though her lips had the crimson of health, there was sadness in the blue depths of her eyes. Her hair was jet-black, fine as silk, and rippled very slightly on her temples. With much beauty of feature and colouring, perhaps her finest charm lay in the perfect grace of her movements. There was a sort of nobility, without hauteur, in the very pose of her head; and when she turned to any one with a smile, the loveliness was irresistible.

Colonel Wylde was already seated in the room as his daughter came forward. He held a paper in his hand, and threw it down suddenly.

'At last!' he exclaimed; and as his eye rested on Honora there was a quick light in it.

'Am I so late, papa?' she questioned, and was at his side in a moment.

He broke into a smile.

'Did I say so? No, no; you are not so dilatory as another person we know of. You were a

little too quick, indeed, in one instance. An engagement with an impoverished man is a matter which may be very leisurely entered upon.'

Honora's colouring came and went with the rapidity of agitating thought.

'Have you heard anything about Hugh, father?' she interposed breathlessly.

'Well, yes, I have read something, at all events,' was the reply. 'The eviction campaign begins on Monday.'

The words had an exciting significance for the gentleman, but Honora turned white as death.

What was money, what was power, success—anything in the whole world—compared with the safety of the beloved one?

'O, I dreaded this,' she exclaimed. 'This is not the time for an extreme measure. Risk—peril—may attend it.'

'What would you have?' broke in her father angrily. 'Is a man to beggar himself to enrich knaves? Is he to show himself such a coward that he throws down every farthing he possesses at the demand of the first ruffian?'

'Hugh is no coward,' said Honora. 'He is generous, forbearing.'

'It is well he has some views of his own, and does not follow too blindly upon yours.'

'I have never tried to influence him,' said Honora quietly.

'If you could have done so to some effect, so as to bring wisdom to him sooner, the course might have been praiseworthy,' was the reply. 'You are timid, Honora, and I don't object to that state of feeling in a woman: in a man it is culpable. You should understand the difference.'

Honora's thoughts were too intense to admit of discussion. Argument with her father was not a

proceeding she ever willingly entered upon, and she longed only for action now. She had not seen Hugh Carolan for several days, and something of a faint reproach rose up within her heart against him. It could scarcely be very definite in a nature full of trustfulness and tenderness. She blamed him rather for suffering himself and for sparing her.

Breakfast was hurried over, and Honora went out then into a shrubbery in front of the house, one of the walks of which led to a postern gate opening on the road to Foxmount, Hugh Carolan's residence. The day was bright; and as she emerged from the partial gloom of the plantation the more open prospect beyond of slopes and meadow-lands was touched by sunshine. Rain had fallen in the night, but the pressure of clouds and moisture was now lifted for a while off the earth; and it showed itself in an emerald-like radiance—deep, steadfast, green in parts, but with diamond lights glancing athwart a hillside or tree-top. Sweet-scented shrubs had been planted all along the path, and the late bloom of some delicious Bourbon roses filled the air with a faint fragrance, pink clusters peeping here and there in shy blushes through a trailing network of leaves.

Honora, like all sensitive natures, was impressed ever by the influences of Nature, and in a moment of its love and freshness she could not feel wholly despondent. Pausing on her way, she stood looking before her with anticipation rather than anxiety, and a smile suddenly parted her lips, and brought clearness into her beautiful eyes. The next instant Carolan was beside her. She had written to him; she had expected him; yet the rush of pleasurable emotion at her heart set it throbbing

as from the quickening motion of a happy surprise.

'O Hugh, how well you look!' she exclaimed, still holding his hand after she had gently checked the warmth of his first greeting. 'I have been fearing for you, and you seem glad—hopeful.'

'Yes, dearest,' was the reply. 'And I have reason to be so. There is a delight in action, and I have at last tasted of this tonic of life. I have borne as much as any man; but patience becomes exhausted when we see that kindness is misplaced, and that we are the dupes of a low craftiness. I have hesitated to press my own rights in consideration of the impoverishment of others. But I believe now that it is a want of principle that is rife, not a scarcity in the pockets. If it be so, am I justified in a forbearance which is ruinous to myself, which is an injury to you? Yes, Honora; we have waited too long. Your father is tired of the delay. He let fall one hint, which was enough for me. I must win you this year, or perhaps lose you for ever.'

'O Hugh, is that it? Has a thought of the kind urged you in this movement? You ought to have known me better; you ought to have trusted me more.'

'You, Honora? I spoke of your father. His wishes must influence us when his approval is needful to our happiness. He has not as yet bidden you break with me, and I am grateful to him for that; but you must see for yourself that he will never sanction your union to a struggling man.'

'Struggling?' she interposed. 'That is a phase of life we can none of us escape. You, I know, have to encounter difficulties of fortune; but hitherto you have had the goodwill of all around you. Is that little?'

'Were it not it would be much.

But can I trust to it, if it is shown in no kindness—not even fairness? A blessing follows me now and again, but it is pretty much a case of "Be ye warmed and filled." Practically, I am left destitute.'

'But, Hugh, if these tenants are in want themselves, whether from improvidence or any other cause, are not extreme measures unavailing? They can bring you nothing, and must work desolation for others.'

She looked earnestly at him as she spoke; and to try and convince her of the benefits of harshness would have been an uncongenial task to any one who met her tender gaze. Hugh Carolan saw calm and sunshine around her; his own heart felt light, and presentiments fled at the touch of hopefulness. Something in the hour, and the loveliness of air and prospect, which breathed only a sort of idyllic quiet, forbade aught of stormy thought.

'Honora!' he exclaimed, 'don't picture what is not before us. The smiles of to-day are a good omen. A darker sky may be far distant. Without force our object may be effected. There may be no defiance—no evictions.'

'Heaven grant it!' she murmured. 'And if you can trust, Hugh, I should take courage, too. My father, I know, is hopeful, and condemns me as timid. But, remember, I have only to *think*. If I could act, it would be different.'

Hugh smiled inwardly as he recalled the difficult and trying scenes he had often to pass through, and which a gentle woman's heart would be so ill-fitted to encounter. But he was careful not to chase the returning cheerfulness from her looks by any hint of his own experiences; and when they parted, some minutes later, the autumn sun had a radiance in which happiness only could linger, and it seemed to two beating hearts as if

love were the one strong influence in life which must efface every other power or passion.

II.

THE Irish mind, which craves so much that is not exactly its own, is content anon with very limited supplies. The idea of refinement is quite foreign to it; comforts can be dispensed with—they involve trouble, too high a price to pay—a sort of rough plenty is the sole demand.

Luke Murtagh's domicile and home life showed no deviation from the rule. His cottage lay in a hollow; there was a little stream at one side, with some graceful sally-trees bending over its surface; but beyond this natural touch of embellishment nothing had been done. Not a flower adorned a strip of ground in front, which was left waste and weedy; ducks splashed about in a green unhealthy pool; and the pig had its sty so close under the shelving thatch of the hut that the odours on the very portal were none of the most inviting. Within there was an aspect, not of poverty exactly, but of untidiness; and yet there was a handsome healthy young woman as mistress of the hearth. Rose Murtagh had scarcely been married a year; and as she had been employed previously as a domestic servant at Killavel House, her lack of neatness was the more surprising. She had been a favourite handmaid of Honora Wylde; and when she left her service to marry a farmer on Hugh Carolan's estate she had been a spruce active-looking girl, comely in face and smart in her person. Luke Murtagh, however, had had a former wife, who was intemperate in her habits and

careless of his comforts; and when Rose arrived on the scene, the sight of a smoky interior, dirt-begrimed walls, and four black little urchins, alternately rolling in ashes and mud, discouraged her at once. She spoke of whitewash, some alteration in the chimney, and fresh garments for the children as necessities. But her husband thought hers squeamish; said that, whenever he could afford a good dinner, he would see that there was a clear fire to cook it; and as to the 'little uns, they was strong and well enough, and would be safe to tear out a new suit in a day, if that 'ud suit her.'

Rose succumbed to the force of hopelessness. The children alone had such an affinity for mire that she must have placed herself in the light of the regulation step-mother and accepted a character for absolute cruelty if she had attempted to put them through a cleansing process.

The lovely morning on which the lovers had met and parted among the roses at Killavel House lost its sunshine later. The skies of Erin, variable as the fickle people beneath them, had their tears as ready as their smiles. About three o'clock a light misty rain began; and the soft persistency of its fall increased gradually to a more weighty descent, till the evening proved one of mournful wildness.

About six o'clock Rose had the supper set out, when the half-door of the cottage swung back, and her husband entered. He was both cross and wet; and, without even rubbing his shoes, clogged with field-clay and straw, he flung himself into a seat.

'Well, Luke,' said the wife as cheerfully as she could, 'are you ready for a bit, for I have it ready for you? Whin the teams come on I knew you couldn't stop out, an' I hurried meself.'

The man vouchsafed no reply; but attacked almost voraciously a huge plateful of potatoes, with a slice of butter melting in the midst. No meat was provided; but milk was plentifully imbibed from tall mugs, which were a good measure for the imperial quart. Tea and griddle cake followed as a sort of dessert to the repast; and then, the inner man being fortified, Luke Murtagh found his tongue.

'Nice weather!' he growled. 'It can't hould up fur an hour. When I was just a-cartin' home of the grain, it come down on it like the deluge.'

'Well, it'll clear again, please Providence!' returned Rose. 'It's not a set-in fur rain, I can tell by the crickets. An' we've no call to say much agin the weather. The crops is fair the year.'

'The crops is good enough—bad luck to 'em!' was the reply.

'Luke! Luke!'

'What's the row? Don't they bring me the more toil? an' that's no blessin'. If we get we must give—so they say leastways, though there'll be two words to that same.'

'There's somethin' up the day,' was Rose's remark. 'Don't go a-keepin' it till yerself. Tell's what it be, Luke.'

'You'd be in no hurry to hear, if ye care fur a roof over yer head, my woman. We're to march out on Monday.'

Rose uttered an ejaculation.

'But ye won't go?' she broke out. 'Sure ye'll niver bring us to that, Luke?'

'Is it me yer a-talkin' of? Saddle the right horse, if you please.'

'But, Luke asthore, couldn't you pay somethin'? He's not a hard one—the same Mr. Carolan. Ha must live as well as usselves. Let him have a part of the rint, at laste. We can't walk out an' the winter a'most on us.'

'Whisht yer prate, woman; I'll

do fur the best, whatever that may be. A house 'ud be little good to ye, if there's nothin' to keep it. If I paid off all that's axed, we'd be bare to the skin. Whatever's over the turf the night? They're burnin' damper nor ever.'

The concluding words were called forth by a puff of smoke, more voluminous than usual, which, first throwing a dusky garb over all lower objects, rose curling to the roof, and lost itself in weird forms amongst the black rafters.

'Where's the childer?' pursued Luke, looking around. 'Whin I doesn't hear a squall from one or t'other, I'm feared there's somethin' wrong.'

The four had been nimble enough at supper-time, discarding seats, but getting their food in snatches from one hand or the other, as parental generosity showed itself.

'I can't keep an eye on them, no more nor keep 'em straight,' said Rose, a little shortly. 'They're somewhere in the smoke, I s'pose.'

The management of this young generation involved almost as many difficulties as the government, in a more extended line, of their elders. They were uncertain, evasive; and presented the pleasing characteristics, in turns, of ignorance, indolence, and ingratitude. Their father liked them in a lazy sort of way; but Rose, who had all the trouble, found them anything but delightful.

There was a gleam, at the moment, out of the darkness of a set of wild eyes, in which mischief was proclaimed as plainly as if placarded in gigantic letters. Then the vision vanished, and the precise nature of the machinations was left to an uneasy imagination.

'Luke,' began Rose after a pause, 'I hould greatly by Miss Honora, an' fur her sake I'd be loth to see Mister Hugh hard be't.

Are ye all set agin him? Is no un to pay? One must "let live," as well as live, ye know.'

'An' which comes furst, my woman? It's foine to talk of yer Miss Honoras an' yer Master Hugh, but it's little a thought they give till ye; much they care whether ye've milk to yer porridge, or a turf on yer hearth.'

'Ye can't say that of all, Luke. Many a thing the young lady give me that ye niver knowed on. She's good and kind, an' ye hadn't ought to say a thing agin her.'

'No more I did, 'gainst her in partikler. But, take 'em all in all, the rich is hard—demmed hard an' selfish!'

The words were uttered with a rough emphasis which signified silence to Rose; but, had reply been thought of, it was doubly arrested. A roar arose at the moment out of the obscurity that had a dominant note in it swelling above every possible cadence. A little anger, but no alarm, showed itself in the face of the father.

'Shut up there, ye thieves!' he cried. 'Ye'd think ye were worth somethin' to hear the tongue ye give yourselves.'

'Tim pinched me,' said a small voice; and then little Kitty, the youngest of the quartett, emerged from murkiness into a light which, however dubious, sufficed to show to full advantage the tears on her begrimed face.

'They's allays quarrelling,' said Rose. 'You had ought to know the feel of Tim's fingers by this time, and be none the worse of it.'

Kitty was a pretty child, with rings of dark hair on her temples, and blue eyes beneath, in which mirth and wrath scintillated alternately. She was never at rest for two seconds together, and sprang now to her father's knee, burying her tangled locks in his arm.

'Whisht, mavoureen!' said the father coaxingly, and put a bit of buttered griddle bread into her plump hand. The wail stopped forthwith, and, raising her head, Miss Kitty darted a gleaming look of triumph on her three brothers. She was the only girl amongst the little ones, and was something of a pet accordingly.

Rose began to clear away the tea-things, lest a further inroad should be made on the viands which were reserved more exclusively for herself and husband. She took up her knitting then, and was meditating a few further words of expostulation with Luke, when her intention was effectually arrested by a full-bodied snore from the latter. He had seated himself in a high-backed straw chair in the chimney corner, and here the soporific influence of smoke and warmth bore him off rapidly into the arms of Morpheus.

III.

KILLAVEL HOUSE was too full of memories to have joyousness for the heart of Honora Wylde. Her mother had died in it, and not so many years ago but that she could remember and still miss the loving presence which had shed light on the home life. Nothing can replace a mother's smile in the household; it is like a dead desert region in which no flower will blossom once this sunshine is gone. A sister older than herself had married recently, and loneliness was now the prevalent feeling for Honora in the void atmosphere around. Her father might be kind, but he could not be sympathetic; and his remoteness from the little interests of a woman's life scarcely brought the warmth of reality into their intercourse.

Above all, he stood apart from her in that matter of her faithful love. He was tired of her constancy, and of that patience on her part which was born not of placidity, but of the very passion of tenderness. She could not question or trouble one whom she trusted entirely, and thus her very affection made her apparently passive. Carolan, however, understood her fully, never looked at calmness in the light of coldness; and thus no shadow of misconception was allowed to cloud their somewhat rare meetings.

On the eve of the eviction day he came over to Killavel House, and by Colonel Wylde's invitation remained to dinner. The elder gentleman approved so much of the present activity of Hugh Carolan that he viewed him with a certain amount of interest, and was gracious accordingly. Honora dressed early; and while her father was still in his room she came down into the drawing-room where Hugh was standing beside a pleasantly blazing wood-fire. Though the weather was mild for the season, the Colonel liked warmth and glow when dusk drew on; and the apartment, with crimson silk curtains drawn across the windows, had an aspect which could foster his predilections. Honora laid a hand on Carolan's arm, and began earnestly,

'While we have a moment together I want to ask you something, dearest. You know the family of the Murtaghs? The man married lately for the second time, and his wife was for years a very faithful servant with us here. I urge nothing, for I feel you will do what is right and just; but would it be possible to be a little lenient with them to-morrow?'

Hugh met her pleading looks fondly, and stooped to touch a silky ripple of hair on her temples,

and put it a little further off her brow.

'The power to act in a particular case of the kind has passed from me now, my love,' he answered. 'But why will not this fellow pay? I believe he could if he would. Am I harsh when others are dishonest, dishonourable?'

'No one can say it,' returned Honora quickly. 'I pleaded only for the Murtaghs because I believed them poor and struggling; they live so wretchedly. But you must know best, and if there is a deception the choice of suffering is their own.'

'Scarcely theirs. They are compelled by an evil influence. It is strange that a people so easily led should incline always to mischievous counsels: that what is for their good and happiness never commends itself to their hearts. But wherever there is a chance of stir and turmoil they turn eagerly, though it should be to break their own heads in the fray.'

'Yes,' interposed Honora, 'they don't know their true friends, nor their real interests. Peace and industry are despised, I think. O Hugh, I dread to-morrow! Obstinacy or recklessness will lead every one astray. No one will regard or remember you. A single act of justice will efface years of kindness.'

'I don't want them to consider me, but themselves,' said Hugh. 'If the impoverishment of the landlords were for the honest good of the peasantry, to improve or enrich them—well—one might reflect. As it is, it requires no great sagacity to see that money with them means neither moral, social, nor intellectual advancement, but just an aid to idleness. Of course, there are exceptions; but these are just the few who *work*: who don't want either to beg or to rob.'

Hugh was becoming quite strong

in his new views. A touch of the apathy and inertness which characterised his fellow-countrymen had rendered him indifferent for long to laxity in others, or losses to himself. The all-powerful influence of love, however, had roused him to action. A chance word let fall by Colonel Wylde, while it moved him alternately with hope and fear, told him that by a successful effort he might claim Honora at once as his wife, or, failing in this, lose her for ever.

The entrance of Colonel Wylde led the conversation back to more surface topics; and Honora, wearing smiles only, showed herself the most charming of hostesses. Her father liked a certain amount of style, even in a *tête-à-tête* dinner, and his daughter never had to be reminded of his tastes. She possessed the perfectly feminine tact which can apprehend a scarcely expressed wish, and carry it into effect without apparent effort, and which, thus ministering to others by a forgetfulness of self, bears with it a subtle fascination.

The repast was served with an elegance seldom followed now. There was a variety of courses, and though none was overwhelming in quantity, they stimulated the appetite by a delicacy of proportion. When the dessert was laid on the table Honora became aware by a dilatory movement on the part of Peter, the butler, emphasised by a glance towards herself, that there was a demand for her presence elsewhere, as soon as a withdrawal from the present scene could be made. Peter was an old retainer of the family, and privileged accordingly. A moment or two later Honora stole away, leaving Carolan rather disconsolate at her refusal of the walnuts which he had been promptly preparing for her. In the hall Peter stood in an 'attitude,' a foot

extended, a finger upraised significantly, and his eyes fixed eagerly on the advancing figure of his young mistress.

'Well, Peter, what is it?' asked Honora quietly.

For all reply the man turned the handle of an adjacent door, and Honora, entering a small morning-room, seldom occupied after luncheon hour, found a lamp burning on the table, and an unexpected occupant of the apartment. A woman in a dark-blue cloak and with a little handkerchief merely tied over her hair was sobbing bitterly as she dropped a curtsy and put a corner of her skirt to her eyes.

'O miss, dear! I knew you'd see me,' she murmured. 'I've but a minute to stay. Luke, he doesn't know I've come, an' he'd be loth to let me, but I can't wait till the grip come on us;' and Rose Murtagh, in view of the desolation of her home, broke anew into weeping.

'O Rose, is it you?' said Miss Wylde kindly. 'I am more sorry than I can tell you about the trouble I hear of. But surely your husband will be wise and reasonable? He will think of you and the children more than of the strangers who are advising him so badly. It is only honest to pay what is due; you would not like others to cheat you.'

'But if he can't, Miss Honor, darlint? Times is bad the year; a heifer died on us from the black leg; an' the pig which we laid such store by took a turn on a suddint, an' we had to kill her afore she fattened. We lost a good three or four pound by the same sow.'

'Rose,' interposed the young lady, 'I can't speak to Mr. Carolan again for you, for I must tell you I have already done so. I had not forgotten you when I learned of this eviction business. But he

couldn't deal differently with you from others; you must see that for yourself. It is a matter of law now which must take its course. The only escape from it is to meet the demand for rent. How much do you owe?

'Overtwenty pound, Miss Honor; an' Luke says he won't give it—he hasn't got it, I mane. I've scraped up five poun' of me own from the selling of eggs and butter-milk, but no less than the whole will be took the morrow.'

'If I thought you really wanted the money, that to help you now would be for your later good, I would try what I could do myself,' said Honora. 'But if there is any unfair dealing,' and she fixed her eyes on the woman, 'it would be neither right for me to aid in it, nor will you prosper from the act. You all but admitted that your husband *could* pay, if he would. Is this so, Rose?'

'No, no, miss; don't think it; never heed on aught I has said. I'm sure we're as poor as poor can be. I never sees a penny that I doesn't gather up meself. O miss dear! but you're the good lady! I knew you'd take thought on us. It's not begging I'd be, I'm sure, but only a lend, till the harvest is in.'

'I'll tell you what I will do, Rose,' broke in Honora; 'you shall have a five-pound note to add to your own savings, and I feel certain your husband can make up the remainder. It will be better to have as small a debt as possible to repay; you will be all the freer for the future.'

As she spoke Miss Wylde went towards her davenport, which stood in the window of the room, unlocked it, and, taking out the sum of money she had promised, put it into Rose's hand. Without waiting for thanks, she bade her good-night then, perceiving that the

woman was in haste, and not wishing, for her own part, that her father or Hugh Carolan should become aware of the interview.

IV.

THE morning of the eviction day rose fair and cloudless over the lands of Foxmount. In soft smiling weather it is difficult to believe in misfortune, or to realise that events can run counter to the forces of Nature. The Irish temperament is especially led to this view of things; and men, and women even, who had soon to brave one of the rudest shocks of Fate and lose the shelter of a home, loitered carelessly in their doorways, gazed lazily at the sky, or chatted with a stray neighbour regarding any casual event. Not until the actual appearance of a large and well-armed party did they wake up to a sense of what was impending. Then there were some violent gestures amongst the heads of the families, outcries on the part of the women, and a general confused retreat within the hovels which were certainly never constructed with a view to withstand the shock of a siege. The feeble barriers of some three-legged stools and rickety tables, crowned by an iron pot or porridge-bowl, could not hold out for long against the application of force. The bailiff was strengthened in his duty by the presence of the stipendiary magistrate, a sub-inspector with a dozen of the constabulary, and a small detachment of military. In every case where the writ had been served, the demand for the arrears of rent was made anew, and, when refused, forcible possession was taken of the holding, and a seizure effected of all the chattels or stock on the

premises. In a very few instances part payment was tendered of the amount due, according to the tenant's own view of right and reason. But no compromise was possible at this final stage of proceedings. The law promptly took effect; and lands, which with little profit to him or themselves had long been estranged from the head landlord, passed back into the hands of Hugh Carolan, Esq., of Foxmount, in the Barony of Kill, &c.

One of the last homesteads to be visited was that of the Murtaghs. It lay rather apart from the other farms, and there was silence in the lonely little hollow as the bailiffs and company approached, broken only by the low uniform voice of the stream. The tenement seemed deserted, for a hush seldom fell on its precincts when the four noisy children were in the possession of waking freedom.

'They've cut and run here,' said a stout-looking man who headed the procession. 'Well, it gives the less work an' worry. We walk in as another walks out.'

Nevertheless, on coming nearer, the half-door only was seen to be up, and there was a sound of crackling sticks on the hearth. At this moment a pair of eyes, deep lined as blue-bells, peeped out from behind a wooden screen that shut off the sleeping chamber. They were those of little Kitty, and curiosity, in which there was no admixture of fear, spoke in their bright glance.

'A kid!' cried more than one voice. 'A young un left on lease! Here's a find for a needy man!'

Kitty emerged now more fully on the scene.

'What yous all want?' she said, and a little sturdy foot, innocent of shoe or stocking, was put defiantly forwards. She had on a clean bib

for a marvel, and her cheeks were so aggressively rosy it was quite plain that the application of a rough towel and water had contributed to the carmine. 'You go 'long,' she added, as the process-server's step was on the threshold. 'Tain't yer house; we've got nothin' for you; not a ha'porth fur beggars.'

Every one laughed, except the leader of the party himself, who had suffered a little too much on previous missions to be in the humour for banter.

'It's not askin', but takin', we are just now, ye young imp,' he said, and proceeded forthwith to seat himself on a rush-bottomed chair which stood prominently in the foreground. Kitty clenched a plump fist and shook it at him.

'Yer a bold bad man!' she cried. 'It's a good walloping ye want, an' I've just a mind to give it t'ye.'

'Go it, my bird,' broke in one of the followers with a grin; 'yer the broth of a girl; it's yer da ought to be proud o' ye.'

'An' so he is. But he'd cuff iviry one of yous, were he here this minute.'

'An' where is he off to, Miss Vixen?' asked the bailiff coolly.

'Where yoe'll not cotch him. But if ye lave a fing-err on me, ye'll cotch it yerselves;' and the small figure took again a combative posture.

'Well, this is a runn turn, to leave a child in it,' began one of the constables; but at this juncture there was a movement behind the rough screen, and a woman's head showed itself facing the intruders.

'Luke Murtagh's out,' exclaimed his wife quickly. 'If it's him ye want, ye must march after him, an' out of this. He can't be in two places at onct, an' whatever's yer call to himself, there's no cause in life that ye should go a-bullyin' his little da'ghter.'

There was a roar of mirth at this.

'That's a good one, it is! She's a match for the whole on us! It's herself that gives the tongue!'

'Come, now,' interposed the bailiff, 'let's have no talk, missis. You know what we're come for, an' if you can send us off, do. If not, I'm afeard it's your room we must ax for, not your company.'

To the surprise of every one, Rose Murtagh stepped boldly forwards at the words, put her hand inside a little checked handkerchief which was crossed on her breast, and drew out a roll of notes. She threw it down on a table beside the bailiff, with an air which would have been scorn in one of more lofty bearing, and which even here called forth a sort of cheer from more than one among the force. She was a comely-looking woman, and held power by the mere weight of this extraneous advantage. The notes were unfolded and counted: there was one for 5*l.*, white and crisp in appearance, the others, of a lower mark in every sense of the word, were 1*l.*-notes, well worn and dirty, but numbered fifteen and bore the impress of the Ulster Banking Company. Inside one the remaining balance of the amount of rent due—nine and sixpence—was tightly wrapped up. The bailiff, who held in this instance the joint offices of under-sheriff and agent, produced his ink-horn and papers, signed a receipt, and pushed it towards the woman.

'You're a quicker hand at things than your good man,' he said shortly. 'He does well to leave you in possession;' and then, with a 'Good-morning,' he rose.

Kitty had been standing open-mouthed during the foregoing process, and her blue eyes grew

rounder than ever as she saw the issue of the matter.

'Turn him out, mammy,' she cried; and before the man could beat a clear retreat he was speeded by a 'backhander' from her small fist.

V.

THE night was dark, but without rain; yet were there signs of coming storm and disturbance on the horizon, where a black mass of clouds lay like a seal on the setting sun and its glory. When the evening of the bright day had closed in, the family of the Murtaghs gathered round a peat fire, and wooed its warmth as if a premonitory chill had brought them nearer winter. Luke and the three boys had only just returned from a prolonged tramp over a neighbouring mountain; and whatever had been the object of the ramble, its most noticeable effects were a muddled state of the outer garments and a decided cloudiness of the temper. The father would not speak, and the urchins were cross and sullen until they were fed, and then became lively only in their spiteful attacks upon Kitty. A pinch now, and a push again, served to allay their irritation in some extraordinary fashion, but very naturally tended to excite that of their small sister. Luke boxed their ears all round; but this means of pacification was scarcely a success on the present occasion. Kitty, who generally escaped, came in by chance for a rather sound clap, and at once roared lustily. An order for bed was issued as swiftly; and Rose, not sorry to be free of the quartet, bundled them behind the screen like so many packages.

'Now, Luke man, what's over ye?' she began, as she took a

stool opposite to her husband. The wide open chimney afforded nooks within its projection, and on either side the hearth a wooden seat was the evening resting-place of husband and wife. 'Isn't it a good job that we're by our own sod of turf still, an' that ye paid the rint the day?'

'I pay it!' he cried out, with an oath. 'Don't ye daur to tell that lie! 'Twas yerself as done it, an' ye may take the luck it brings ye.'

'Thin yer a coward, Luke!' said Rose, roused up to wrath on her side. 'Ye lave the work on my hands, an' make off yerself.'

'An' was it to plaze you or myself I was the like fool?' he returned. 'I should ha' held out; I know that; but ye talked me out of sight an' rayson.'

'Into it is more the fit of the thruth. I wisht I'd never stepped intil the same place. It's an easy time I'd have had of it, an' no call to worry, if you hadn't a come botherin' me.'

The man had a retort on his lips, when something stopped it. It was not the wail of the wind, which had risen ominously within the last half-hour, but a sound more akin to a yell. Luke and Rose sprang simultaneously to their feet.

'It's come!' cried the former. 'The curse is on us already. 'Twern't long in the brewin', an' well I knowed it this minute. Lay a houl't of the childer, Rose, an' if the door's bet in put them out of the back windy. They has fast legs; and so as me wee Kitty can make off, 'twill be a blow the less on us.'

There was no vain terror, no exaggerated emotion, in the quick outburst. None knew better than Luke Murtagh himself how swift and sure can be the vengeance which is the outcome of a popular frenzy. He had been too long

one of a fraternity that opposed itself above all things to law and submissiveness to fall away lightly from its alliance. To try to serve any prudent ends, to be wise or honest, was a vain effort while tied with the bonds of tyrannical mandates and rash promises. He had believed himself powerless; but his wife had rebelled against such helplessness of position, and he had let her struggle accordingly.

There was a pause for a moment now. Husband and wife listened breathlessly. That stillness ensued which in a coming crisis bodes only evil—the calm before the storm. Rose had grasped the man's arm. He, on his part, made no motion; but cold drops had started to his temples, and his hands were clenched till the nails forced themselves into the palms. He was without firearms of any kind; the shaky doors and fastenings of his cottage home were a poor defence against one fierce attack from the ruthless and resolute. He could only await what might follow in that agony of expectation, which is intensified by the accompaniment of inaction.

'All is quiet again, Luke,' murmured Rose at length. 'Mayhap, we were mistaken.'

'Tush, woman!' and Luke shook off her hold, as he made a step nearer to the door. 'D'ye think I'm deaf or daft?'

Rose said nothing; but the pulsations were warmer at her heart, and, quick to fear or to hope, the last sensation was gaining strength anew.

The children were not yet asleep, and there was a stir from one of them now. The eldest of the boys had leaped up in his bed, and at the same instant he uttered a loud cry. It was not of fright, rather of joy.

'Daddy, come quick! Look, look!' he exclaimed.

Rose and the father rushed in, and saw through the little curtainless window at the foot of the settle-bed a bright red light, which filled the small dim panes with an Aladdin-like splendour, and made roseate the room, the eager face of the child, and the whole heavens without.

The woman flung up her arms.

'The rick's on fire!' she screamed. 'The winter hay's a-burning, ivry screed of it. Save us alive, but we're kilt intirely!'

Luke's eyes grew bloodshot as he gazed. He could do nothing for a moment but mutter curses between his teeth; while Rose, wringing her hands, gave vent to piercing laments of her own. The children alone shared the excitement without seeing aught of the horror or ruin it entailed. They were every one alert now, and popping up from beneath the scanty coverlet, which they shared all together on the same rough couch, their motions rapid as so many rabbits starting from their burrows, and their faces keen with watchfulness and delight.

'O daddy, ain't it grand! Is it r'ally the rick?' murmured Kitty.

'Ay, an' it'll be the oats next—the bit o' bread out of yer own mouth, my lamb!' and, breaking down at the words, the man literally sobbed aloud.

Rose had her energies more under command. Anger, with her, rose above dismay.

'Don't ye give way, Luke!' she cried. 'Let's out, man, an' see what can be done. The cowshed may catch next.'

The thought of the heifer calf and beautiful brindled cow, that milked down her eighteen quarts a day, put to flight the last touch of panic for Rose. She rushed

forth distractedly, followed, at a somewhat slower pace, by her husband. He seemed helpless in the crisis, feeling but too surely that what was saved now would be marked for ruin again. An arm was crippled in its power that was held by the benumbing influence of this thought, and his exertions were slow and sorrowful. The four little ones, in their bare legs and feet, were tenfold more active; and Rose, for once in her life, felt their presence a boon, when they set buckets of water afloat in the yard, amid encouraging cries, vied with one another in the rough readiness with which the peat-stack was overturned and borne away in armfuls to safer quarters; while a slash from the broomstick, held by the eldest urchin, sent the cow and calf scampering like wildfire to the nearest field.

VI.

SOME weeks had passed away. There was brightness in Killavell House, which was something more than a smile from Nature. Honora's step was gay and buoyant, and her whole aspect had undergone a change. She had tasted of the elixir of happiness, and there was new life in the draught. With her hand clasped in that of Hugh Carolan, she could feel steadfastness and trust; she could look down the vista of coming years and let light prevail, see all through the beams of hopefulness. At last she was to be his, and without her father's love being separated by the act. Thus, everything of joy was added to her lot—nought withdrawn or weakened.

The recent action of Carolan had pleased Colonel Wylde. He was a martinet himself in deeds and discipline, and could approve

of promptitude and resolution in others. He had made a promise, too, and he was not one to fail in it. Though no very remunerative results had followed as yet from the eviction campaign, still right had been asserted. If Hugh Carolan found no new tenants for his farms, he was at least their sole owner, without dispute or hindrance, and the Colonel prophesied great things from a capable management.

'Get a second steward,' he said, 'buy up young stock at all the neighbouring fairs, and see if they don't bring you in pretty speedy returns.'

That such a course demanded, in the first instance, a considerable amount of capital, and furthermore, that grass-lands, ready laid down, did not prevail everywhere, the Colonel scarcely paused to calculate. Matters so long stagnant were at length in train; and the mere excitement of motion ministered to his gratification. In accordance with the prevailing state of things, a wedding was only a fitting festivity, and he allowed Honora's marriage to be fixed for a near date.

It was the eve of that day now. Servants were astir in the house attending to preliminary decorations; but the bride-elect herself sat in the bow-window of the drawing-room, too happy to do aught but think, borne away too far into the tract of dreamland to see or heed the movements of commonplace life. She scarcely started, a flush only of the deepest carmine rose to her cheek, when, roused by footsteps which had crossed the carpet unheard, she found that Hugh Carolan was beside her. She had not expected him; but he was too visible in her thoughts to make his actual presence a surprise; and it was only when her heart had yielded to its first

emotions of delight that a question came.

'But how is it you are here, dearest? I thought you told me you had business at Ballymourne to-day, and that I must not be disappointed if I did not see you?'

Hugh looked a little pale, there was a certain nervousness almost in his aspect; but a smile which he summoned to his aid hid everything but love from the eyes he was gazing into.

'I am going immediately,' he answered; 'but it was not very far out of the way to come to Killavell first, and you know I am always self-indulgent.'

If she knew something else with still more assurance—that he was always thoughtful of her—Honora was not visited by a shade of uneasiness. Happiness, that came so near, seemed already in her grasp, and she took it trustfully. The present had glided from her in her late reveries, and she stood full in view of the morrow's sunshine.

Presently Carolan drew a little packet from his pocket, and the golden circlet which was so soon to be brought into use was produced from a paper wrapping.

'I ought to know the size of this dear hand,' he said, withdrawing the engagement ring from Honora's finger, and putting the wedding one in its place. 'But I may as well make conviction doubly certain. It is just the fit, is it not? Don't change before to-morrow and become thinner, or the reverse.'

'Am I so capricious, Hugh?'

'No, no; but there is a sort of magic in these fairy hoops, and you must be a match for it. My mother often told me that she had to have her marriage ring replaced three times. Twice over she found her finger bereft of its ornament. The guard ring has

baffled such mishaps now ; but, no doubt, there was found to be good occasion for it.'

Talking thus lightly, Hugh passed some happy moments ; then the leave-taking had to come. As he held his bride in his arms, something of his earlier agitation passed into the man's face. Struggle as he might to subdue it, it grew overmastering in the unnerved instant of farewell. He pressed her closer, yet closer, to him, and a deep breath, almost a sigh, escaped his lips. Honora caught it, and her own heart gave a throb which had the strong pulsation of fear.

Half releasing herself, she sought to meet the glance of his eyes ; but he avoided her quick questioning look, and this in itself awoke keener alarm.

'O Hugh, what is it?' she cried. 'Something has gone wrong. Tell me ! tell me !'

He was smiling once more.

'My fanciful child, what have I said or done?' he exclaimed. 'May I not kiss you, again and again, and not be called to account?' and he renewed his last caresses. 'Do you want me to grow cold suddenly? Would that seem to you all right—this all wrong? Now I must really be off. My business is most important; I have let a farm! Think of that, Honora! And the leases are to be signed to-day at Ballymoure.'

Still, there was a dread—strange, inexpressible ; but it clung to her loving woman's thoughts—it was a warning voice calling louder than all else in her ear. No appeal, no power of pleading or persuasion could avail to silence it.

'Hugh, you must not go!' she broke out. 'Not till you tell me everything. Is there danger, is there enmity amongst the people—the tenants who were evicted?'

'Well, I suppose they are not too greatly pleased,' said Hugh lightly. 'But what of that? You said once, my darling, that I had the good-will of every one. If I lost it because I acted in accordance with right and reason, I don't think it was worth much—too little to cause trouble to me or you.'

'But they have not threatened you? There is no plot of revenge thought of?'

Her eager eyes were fixed on him, the hands which he would have released clung to his, a touch of actual force would have been needed to escape from the earnestness of her interrogations. He followed the only course possible—he took her partly into his confidence.

'My own love, I don't say I have been uneasy,' he murmured; 'but others would fain have made me so. Cowardice is not much of a weapon; it is this I have to deal with. Menace loses half its force when it is uttered; and to make me fear seems the chief object of it at present. I won't do that. Don't tell me I am wrong, then!'

'O Hugh, has it been thus? And you never let me know! I have been so happy; my father was pleased and assured. All seems well!'

'And is it not so still? What is there amiss, dearest? We start to-morrow for an absence of some months. When we come back all will be serene in spring sunshine. I shall have a few new tenants. There is the whole change.'

The mention of the morrow sent a rapid thrill through her. Her face was no longer so deadly pale. She raised her head from his shoulder, and again questioned him with her beautiful eyes. The tears which had started to them but added to their lustre, the whole love of her heart seemed to lie in their depths and lend to them the

irresistible power of tenderness and entreaty.

'Hugh! Hugh! If I am foolish, do not you be foolhardy,' she murmured. 'Who is going with you to Ballymoure to-day? You are not riding alone?'

'No, no, I am riding,' he said. 'Red Pepper carries me swifter than any two-wheeler. And do you know I am rather late? My appointment is for three o'clock. I shall have to hasten;' and with a last hurried good-bye he went out so quickly that she could not stay him. He had left his horse at the stableyard on arriving; but the groom was leading him up and down now in front of the house, and in an instant Carolan had leaped into the saddle, and just letting the bridle loose on Red Pepper's neck he was borne off in a canter. Suddenly he stopped, and the animal, pulled up so abruptly, fell back on his haunches. Its rider had begun a confused search in his waistcoat-pockets. He had forgotten the wedding-ring, and once assured of this fact, he beckoned to the groom and sprang instantly to the ground.

At the moment Honora was seen on the steps of the portico, and she ran towards him. She had found what he missed, and there was one last exchange of smiles ere he had again mounted and left her. The fiery steed was in a state of impatience by this time that brooked no further curb. He revenged himself for the delayed departure by a wild race of his own; and if Carolan had wished to make up for any lost moment by present speed, Red Pepper took charge of that matter and saved him any exhibition of urgency on his own account.

Honora stood gazing after him. The day had a certain tinge of sadness in its atmosphere which affected her insensibly, scarcely with

anxiety, but with a sort of presentiment of pain. The perfect sunlight on the future had vanished; she was looking into a dimmer land, where shadows arose and night fell, where the earthly grew stronger than the celestial.

Her gaze had been fixed so steadfastly on the figure of Hugh that it was withdrawn with difficulty from the vista in the long avenue of lime-trees, where it had faded from her view. As her glance first fell on nearer objects she started slightly at seeing that the groom was close by her side, and that he was presenting something to her. A mere scrap of paper it appeared. It was creased and rumpled like that which had enveloped the ring, and she took it carelessly from the man.

'Mr. Carolan dropped it, Miss, as he jumped off the horse. I found it on the gravel by the roadway when he had galloped on.'

It was the wrapping of the ring, she still thought, and, just holding it absently in her grasp, she re-entered the house. As she was crossing the hall a servant met her, her own maid, who was bearing something aloft with great care. It was the bridal dress, which had just been sent home, and the young mistress was called upon to examine and admire. The glossy folds of the satin were displayed, draped with airy wreaths of lace and Cape jessamine, and the sweet loveliness of hope came back to Honora's face as her visions took their colouring once more from the snowy garb and what it intimated.

To pass the time she went out very soon afterwards to the gardens, which, even in their late autumnal looks, had a beauty of their own. She paced the broader walks, where the dahlias stood alongside in full-blown gorgeoussness, and the very rustle of some

crisp leaves beneath her feet, fallen from the apple-trees overhead, had pleasantness for her ear, and seemed to take from the loneliness that surrounded her. Presently, however, she left the enclosed precincts and followed the wood-path that led to the little postern gate opening on the high road. It was here she had often met Hugh Carolan, as it was his nearest way from Foxmount, and every spot of the ground was full of memories for her. She recalled the scent of the sweet Malmaison roses on that September morning when she had wandered along the walk anxiously expecting him, and he had come suddenly in view with his sunniest smile. Strangely enough this vision evaded her now; and she could see him only with the unnatural pallor, the changed look which had cost her heart a pang in their recent meeting. One fleeting expression of the kind seemed to have grown stronger than all his habitual brightness, and turn where she would it became haunting as a phantom. The short day was already on the wane, and its misty stillness caused a pressure on her heart, a half-stifled feeling, as when tears are hardly held back from the eyelids. The verse of a song she had sung once came unexpectedly to mind, and the words followed her with a mournful persistency. She repeated them half aloud:

'I walk'd in the garden of roses with
thee,
In the garden where never again we
shall be;
And thy ghost in the gloom now is all
that I see,
For thou comest never.

The light of the morning, the splendour
that threw
O'er the roses and myrtles its mystical
hue,
Is gone, with the glory of love that we
knew,
For ever and ever.'

She started when a curve taken
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in the path brought her in view of an advancing figure. It was only the sudden recall from reverie which could cause a nervous motion of the kind, for the postern gate was not generally locked, and this walk was often used by any one who had business at the house.

A step or two more, and the dusk seemed lifted; some dark shrubs were passed, and Honora found Rose Murtagh before her. Some one else, too. A small form loitering in the background had trotted up to the side of the woman; and little Kitty, bright and elfin-like as an Undine in the wood, fixed her clear eyes on the young mistress of Killavel.

The child was in a 'Galway' cloak, and wore no hat. Her hair, too wildly luxuriant to follow any undulations but its own, fell freely on her shoulders, some locks in curls, others rippling. Her feet were bare, but glistening with dew-drops, and showed a shell-pink colouring beneath a short petticoat of blue serge. She looked so pretty thus that Honora drew her towards her and kissed her with an impulse of that loving warmth which springs spontaneously from the heart, and ignores alike the restraints of place or position.

Rose could only drop curtsy after curtsy.

'I'm sure you're too good, miss,' she murmured. 'Kitty, don't be forward.'

'O, she is doing no harm, Rose,' said Honora, smiling, and letting the little hands cling to her gown and fur jacket, and feel their richness as they would. 'She is a good little girl, I am sure.'

'Whiles, Miss Honora. She has her bouts like another. But there's not a doubt of it the boys teases her terrible.'

'There are three of them, are there not?' asked Honora.

'Deed, an' no less, miss. If

they was my own I'd say they was a deal too many, but one mustn't find fault with what another sets afore us. I'll ask you to 'scuse me for bringin' Kitty along of me the day, mistress, but I was afeard to leave the lass with her brothers. There'd be a row in no time.'

'I am very glad to see her,' interposed Honora. 'Were you going as far as the house?'

'I jest was, miss, but I needn't now. 'Twas only about the five pounds, to pay back the lend you were so good as to make us,' and Rose's hand went up to the check handkerchief that always guarded her treasures safer than a fine lady's purse.

'No, no, Rose, don't think of this,' said Honora quickly. 'You have heard of my marriage, I am sure—that I am leaving Killavell to-morrow? I shall be so glad if you will keep this little sum as a parting gift from your old mistress. It was right of you to pay the rent; that act in itself gives me thanks enough.'

But Rose Murtagh could not think this. She was profuse in the outpourings of her gratitude and her praise of the young lady's goodness; and the ebullition reached a height when Honora invited her and Kitty up to the house to see the wedding-dress and other preparations for the coming festivities. Cheerfulness had quite come back to the bride-elect in her exertions to please others, and she could not help smiling at Kitty's wild expressions of delight when the child was given a rich round cake for herself, which she clasped to her heart as if it had been a living pet and all but covered with kisses.

'O mammy, it's mine!' she cried exultantly. 'Did ye ever see the like? It's granner than the school-feast bracks—the whole batch of 'em!'

The beautiful satin robe was shown last to admiring eyes. It was lying on a long sofa-couch in Honora's dressing-room, just where the maid had laid it down after her young lady had inspected it. Honora had not that devotion to finery which would set it apart as a thing not to be eyed or handled. She betrayed no symptom of panic therefore when Kitty approached and put a plump finger on the glossy fabric. Rose nevertheless screamed, and in pulling the child back something was shaken from the folds of the satin. Honora took it up. 'O, it is only a scrap of paper which Mr. Carolan dropped when he was here to-day,' she said, and quietly smoothed out the crushed surface. 'I suppose I let it fall inadvertently as I was examining the dress before.'

She had not looked at it until now, and saw for the first time that the inside was no blank, as she had thought. Gazing intently, a sudden change came across her face. A moan, rather than a cry, parted her lips, and she turned white as death. Something only too horribly clear was traced upon the sheet. It was a rude sketch, but the bold black strokes were unmistakable in the form they took. They indicated a coffin. Underneath was a line or two of writing:

'You've had yer last warnin'. 'Twill be a buryin'—no weddin' the morrow.'

Honora seemed paralysed. She did not move or relax her hold of the paper, but gradually a more deadly faintness crept over her. She was about to totter when Rose sprang to her side.

'Mistress! dear, darlint mistress! what is it?'

Honora clung to her, and in a wild agony of terror words at last found utterance.

'Look, look! O, is it murder

is meant? What shall I do? How can I save him?

Rose Murtagh had given but a glance, but her eyes distended in horror. She asked—she needed to ask—nothing. Dreadful suspicion—more than that, a certainty—pointed to crime indeed, and to the hand that should be stained with it. She saw it already reddened before her. It was that of her husband!

Instantly she was rushing from the room. Then she stopped.

'Where is he? where is Mister Hugh?' she cried. 'Send after him, miss darlint! Don't lose a second!'

'But he knows, and he has not heeded,' began Honora. 'We are too late! O Rose, Rose!'

The woman no longer heard. She had fled, followed by the child; and quickened by another's rapidity to a sort of despairing action on her own side, Honora sprang to the bell, ordered the swiftest horses to be put immediately to the carriage, and long before it could be round was standing at the window ready dressed for departure.

Her father at the moment came into the room.

'What is this, Honora?' he said. 'Where are you going to?'

In a second she had told him all.

'O father, when can we reach it? We must drive instantly to Ballymourne,' she pursued.

'Yes, yes,' interposed the Colonel briefly; 'but not you, my child. I shall be quicker alone. I will take the tax-cart.'

'But I *must* go,' murmured Honora, and there was something so steadfast in the fixed pallor of her looks, in the dull agony of her tone, that none could gainsay her. A few instants later, and she was in the carriage with her father. They started rapidly, the horses were urged to their utmost speed,

but it was a long drive of nearly three hours, and dusk had changed to the blackness of night ere the distant town could be gained. Drawing up before a tall gaunt house, with a shabby signboard above designating it as an inn, Colonel Wylde leaped from the carriage. A hurried question brought as prompt an answer: 'Mr. Carolan had left hours ago.'

'But how? which way?' called out the gentleman. 'We have come direct, passing by Foxmount. There is only the one main road.'

He had ridden across the fields, they learnt then, and would probably follow a short cut known as Moss-lane, which led to the gate of Foxmount. It was impossible to pursue his track here, and the Colonel tried to convince Honora that, forewarned as he had been, Hugh had chosen this unfrequented route with the intent of baffling any sinister designs pointed against his safety.

'O, why did he go? Why did he leave me?' was all she could murmur in the anguish of her mind.

'I suppose the business was imperative, in view of his prolonged absence from home,' returned her father. 'And you see, Honora, there was no reason he should mind the present threat more than another. There have been many futile ones, as he told you. Why should he fear this?'

'But I fear it,' she broke in wildly. 'O father, father, hasten back! Take me to Foxmount! Let me see him! O, if he is living, let me see him.'

Colonel Wylde, while he tried to reassure his daughter, was not without some nervous anxiety himself, and he at once gave the order as she wished. Carolan's property was a mile nearer to Ballymourne than Killavel, and a short sweep from the main road led direct to

its entrance-gates. But taken at the quickest pace the distance thither could not be traversed under a space of two hours.

It was now about eight o'clock; but no moon had risen, and the air, though free from raindrops, was dull and weighty. There was a quietness in the night which was in itself oppressive. Hopelessness pervaded the earth, and drew it under a gray solemn spell, tearless, unchanging. One could picture no dawn from the close uniform clouds. It seemed as if they alone held the tint of life, and had shrouded for their last sleep day and sunlight.

Honora, sitting speechless in the back of the carriage, started ever and again, but it was only in view of some inner phantom. Eagerness, expectation had died out. She appeared to know already that every effort was vain, that her fate was even now sealed. She could not separate it from that of her loved one. In life or death he was hers, and she felt as if her own heart must stop as his gave its last beat.

VII.

WHEN Rose quitted Killavel House she had run breathlessly to her own home. Something as actual as physical force drove her panting, terrified, exhausted to the threshold of the little hut in the hollow. This gained, she leant against the half-door, and the reaction of sudden relief, while it checked the power of motion, sent the blood in full tide to her heart. Her husband was within. She saw him stooping over the hearth, and raking up the turf ashes to kindle his pipe. She was in time; she could save him yet! From the instant that she had descried that paper in Miss Wylde's hands

dread had taken possession of her. She knew the writing as that of her husband, and seized in a lightning flash the significance of much which had lately passed. Since the night of the firing of the stack there had been a change in Luke Murtagh. His apprehension of further outrages yielded all at once to another restlessness, an outside rather than inner perturbation. He was constantly in movement, in communication with the neighbours, and more especially with the evicted tenants, and when questioned by Rose as to his doings, he evaded explanation. She divined, however, by his association with the malcontents at Land League meetings, as well as at more private and sinister gatherings of their own, that some plot was working. Now she understood it all. He had atoned for the crime of satisfying the demands of law by setting himself in mortal antagonism to it. Life-blood was to pay for an imagined wrong, and his was to be the hand to shed it.

Yet a moment or two, and Rose entered. Luke started as the door swung back, and fixed his eyes on the flushed and still agitated form of the woman.

'Where hev ye been to?' he asked roughly. 'The boys is rampant fur their supper; I sent them out to have some peace. Did ye take Kitty along of you?'

'Yes; she's comin' after, but I run faster. O Luke, Luke, I got such a fright!'

She had not thought to tell him, but in the confusion of the moment all escaped her; and then, taking a step nearer to her husband, she laid her hand on his arm.

'You'll not leave us the night?' she said. 'Sit down, man, an' I'll make the tay in no time. I've a cut of bacon fur ye, too, an' I can fry up the cold petaties.'

'I'm off, Rose,' he interposed, and his tone, though gentler, had the dull quiet of resolve. 'But get the supper fur yerselves. Don't wait; I may be late.'

She watched him narrowly. He had his pipe lighted now and put to his lips; but still he delayed. He sought something, for she saw his eyes lowered, then raised furtively, as if in the desire to evade her glance and impatient of its observance. For a second she averted hers, stooped to push back a fagot from the hearthstone, and instantly looked round. Her pulses leaped. Luke Murtagh had his hand thrust into a nook beneath the cottage thatch. It was withdrawn, but he held something in it; there was the gleam of metal. With one bound she was beside him, and saw that he had grasped a revolver. She threw her arms about him. With a strain on every nerve in her frame, she poured forth her entreaties, adjurations.

'Luke, Luke, you'll never do it! Think of me darlint Miss Honora! She that's bin that good to us! My eyes is still restin' on her weddin'-dress as she showed it so glad an'proud-like; is it to a shroud you'd turn it? O man dear—you that have a wife and childer—you must have some heart in ye!'

'What d'ye know, what d'ye say, woman?' and Luke, releasing himself with difficulty, stood back a pace.

'Ye can't deny it, not with that cruel thing in yer hand! O, what did he ever do, how did he ever hurt us, that poor dear Mr. Hugh should be a marked man? His father afore him was good to ye. I've heard ye tell of the same. Could ye lie happy in yer bed; could ye e'er get God's blessed rest agin if ye sent an innocent soul to his last sleep?' Rose shuddered. She had conjured up already a

ghastly vision, a pursuing phantom, and a chill of icy horror ran through her veins. 'See,' she cried, 'I will kneel to you, Luke! Did I ever do that afore? Would I do it now but to save ye from blood-stains, from the black blot of murder?'

She had dropped upon the clay floor; she had seized him despairingly again, her eyes were upturned, her hair damp, her whole face changed to gray deathliness with the agony of entreaty.

Luke tried to push her back; but some whiteness passed into his own features, and he raised a hand to his brow.

'Murder!' he muttered. 'Tain't that, girl. 'Tis nought but a shot such as takes off meany a one in the blaze of battle who's niver harmed mortal. We fires the like when our homes is attacked; our hard earnin's, our lives.'

'Not life, Luke.'

'Ain't it, then? How's the breath kep' in ye but by the food we sows an' sweats fur? It's a small taste of it ye'd get if we wur stripped as bare as a graspin' hand 'ud lave us. There, there, woman! I know well what I be at, an' that now or never we must stan' up and give fight. The folk of the countrys bin too long in the two lots—beasts of burden, an' birds of prey. It's a few *men* is wantin' in it. If they're to the fore at last, you should be proud of the same.'

'Them's not yer words, Luke,' cried Rose. 'None was tramplin' on ye. Ye were never left without bit an' sup, nor found a hard hand to pull it back from yer lips. 'Tain't the gentry, nayther, has made ye afeard now for house and goods, but another sort of folk. Who set the light to our rick, and left us a heap of blackened dust i'stead of our sweet clover hay? Was that a gen'l'man's doin'?

Was't he took the food from ye then ?

Truth broke forth in the utterance, but it was too sharp a weapon for her woman's hand to seize. The stab to another recoiled upon herself. Sullen wrath rose up within Luke as he felt her strike home, and was defenceless on his side. He had recourse to rough resolve.

'Quit yer talk, Rose Murtagh !' he exclaimed. 'When yer know betther what to say, 'tis time enough to say it. I h'arkened to ye afore, an' 'twas to our loss I done it. I'll be no fool agen.'

With violence he loosened her hold of his knees, and, as she fell back, the weapon was grasped tighter in his hand, and he strode to the door. In one spring the repulsed wife gained her feet, and stretched after him appealingly.

'O, for the love of God !' she wailed, 'Luke, Luke, hear to me ! Think of yer wee Kitty ; of the black woe may follow this night. If yer took there'll be a stain on her sweet face for ever ; she'll be a felon's child.'

She would have continued, but the words seemed unheard, unheeded : he was gone. Already he was late. He felt that double speed must save him from the vengeance of the most cruel and unrelenting of spies. Unless he would brave this, he dare pause no more. Yet, as his foot crossed the threshold, something smote him like a blow. His wife had wrestled with him, prayed to him, knelt to him ; he had been hardened to her, and she knew not why. He could not leave her thus. For one second he was held back, looked in, and met her eyes. His face, dark and shadow-naunted as a Cain's, framed itself in the gloom of the doorway.

'Listen,' he murmured, and the words came forth in a hissing whisper, 'I've an *oath* on me ;

could I break that ? 'Twould be my blood, Rose Murtagh—death at yer own door was I stopped now !'

VIII.

SOMETHING was following him, surely something was following him ! Yet he could not look round. He was a coward, as all are who take a deadly weapon in hand and steal forth secretly to smite friend or foe. No courage, but fear was driving him on his path ; and with this corpse-like companion by his side he felt paralysed as to all motions but the one—he must go on.

It was scarcely six o'clock now, two hours before the time when Honora had gained the little inn at Ballymourne. Every movement of the intended victim was noted and watched ; more than that, controlled and influenced. He was to be detained in the town until a fixed hour, and, in view of his taking a different return route from the accustomed one, on his own grounds, on the very avenue of his own home, he was to fall by the assassin's shot.

The drive from the gateway of Foxmount to the house was a long and winding one. It led up a steep hill at first. About fifty yards from the entrance, there was a thick grove of trees. Firs and pines stretched their dark branches here over an underwood of ferns ; and, beyond the plantation fringe, a deep dyke separated the demesne itself from one of the outlying farms.

This grove was the spot chosen for Luke Murtagh's ambush. He could gain it easily from pasture-lands without by a leap into the ditch and a scramble up the bank ; and vanish as rapidly, escape as securely, by the same route, when

the time came. Hugh Carolan being mounted, the horse must slacken its pace at the somewhat abrupt ascent in the avenue; and, in fact, as was well known, the rider always threw the bridle at this point on his favourite's neck.

Dusk had come on; but it was not dark. An after-twilight lingered in the sky, and made pale the objects beneath it, touching them, in the stillness, with a sort of ghostly hue. Low-lying mists wrapped the earth as in a winding sheet; and everywhere there was that indistinct mournfulness associated with the dying out of an autumnal day.

In the dull silence of the air every lower tone was significant. The leaves had a startling rustle under Luke Murtagh's feet. It seemed to follow him, to rise into motion and shrill warning cries. This must be the pursuing sound he heard, and from which he shrunk, without daring to fathom it.

He had only to cross a field or two from his own cottage, and the vicinity of Foxmount was gained; and all too soon he stood under the gloomy canopy of the fir-trees, watched the white line of the avenue from beneath its covert, and listened keenly for the looked-for sound. His brain was now in a numbed state; his heart had resigned every struggle for compassionate prompting; his senses only were aroused and expectant; and he was on the alert to let physical action follow promptly on the signal they conveyed to him.

He had not long to wait. The tramp of horses' feet was detected in the distance; the steed had been checked, and was coming along at the slow measured pace which was to lead its master to his doom.

Luke Murtagh made a step forwards. He was a sure aim; he

had been for years in the militia ranks, and was the best shot there. His hand was not unsteady now; everything in earth and heaven seemed blotted out but the one form which was to draw his vision, the one deed he was to do. If he had ever had a feeling of shrinking, a thought of pity, it was gone—struck down by the fierce animal instinct which seeks and seizes its prey with the sole leading of cunning and cruelty.

The rider came nearer; Luke's eyes peered from behind the hearselike plumes of the thickest of the pines. They formed a screen for him, but were a mourning veil all the while, which he could penetrate or raise. One second more, and Hugh Carolan was opposite to him. The man's arm was extended, the revolver placed at the true level, the trigger pulled. Again that strange haunting noise; the underwood was stirred; there was a rustle of a thousand blood-red leaves—they seemed to be whirring round his brain. But all was lost for him in the echoing accents of a child's cry: 'Daddy, don't!' His hand had been seized, his aim averted, but the shot which had sped found a breast to bury itself in: it had drawn the life-blood of little Kitty.

IX.

THERE was a wedding on the morrow, and sunshine to gild it, but a funeral had to follow too. A day later, and a tiny coffin was borne from the hut in the hollow, and was laid, amid the dewdrops of an early misty morning, in a sweet sheltered nook under the greenest sod of the churchyard. It was a fitting spot for a little one to lie in, for flowers to spring from, for a bride, in all the touching

loveliness of emotion, to shed tears upon, as she remembered in her own happiness that the joy had been paid for by a young life, that a moment's graciousness in her had so won upon a child's heart that it had sprung to save hers from breaking to its own death.

Spring lights touched the quiet grave now; it lay under a glance from open skies. Earth might be forgotten in the hopes breathed full upon it from higher airs, in the shining Presence of the Heavens, which have a smile for ever for love and heroism.

LOVE AMONG THE ROSES.

Love stood beside a rosebud one day, smiling,
And looking at the bud with tender eyes;
And near that rosebud came a maid, beguiling
The time with dreams and pleasant memories.

She saw the bud, and kissed it as a duty,
And touched its velvet bloom with longing lip;
And wondered at its perfect breath and beauty,
And envied every bee that came to sip.

'Here would I stay,' she cried, 'this golden morning,
In all the glory of the leaves and flowers;
And, grief forsaking, sordid labour scorning,
Delay with happiness the fleeting hours.'

And when Love saw her kiss the rosebud lightly,
He wondered which was fairer—maid or rose?
The more he gazed at her, so fair and sightly,
The more he felt inclined to interpose.

And somehow—how, I never knew for certain—
He crept between the rosebud and the lip;
So, when she kissed again—I draw a curtain
Around the maid who made so sad a slip!

And how it was she lingered with him after,
Is more than I can answer; all I know
Is, that the garden rang with rippling laughter,
Till the rose blushed to hear her laughing so.

She kissed the rose again, and, archly smiling,
'Here would I stay,' she cried, 'and never stir';
For while her simple heart had been beguiling
Old Time, Young Love had been beguiling her!

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.

MIDSUMMER COOKERY.

WHILE strolling along the shady side of the principal street in a much-frequented seaside town one sultry July afternoon, my attention was caught by a visitor who was standing spellbound in front of a well-curtained restaurant's window. The objects on which his gaze was fixed (and nothing else but those was visible) were a perfect lobster, without a single claw missing, great or small, and as brilliant in its scarlet armour as the varnish of a drop of olive-oil, skilfully smeared over it, could make it; and beside this, a large bowl containing a bright bouquet of the greenest, freshest cabbage-lettuces, still whole and unmanipulated, and waiting, almost begging, for some neat-handed Phyllis to pull them to pieces.

As I passed, the stranger half said, half sighed, 'What a pity! 'Tis too hot to eat. What a pity!' Whether the exclamation was addressed to me, or to himself, was doubtful; probably to both.

Observing that his nose was suffused with a ruby glow, as intense, though not so glaring, as the lobster's red, and which assuredly would have been phosphorescent, like a firefly in the dark, I was about to respond, 'Yes; it is too hot to eat now; but I don't think it is too hot to drink.' But fearing that the remark might be interpreted as an invitation, I acted like the famous sage, turned my tongue seven times in my mouth, and then, saying nothing at all, went on my way, leaving the amateur to continue his admiration of the works of Nature, since the temperature precluded his appreciating

them after due preparation by culinary art.

Yes, really; it was too hot to eat at three o'clock that blazing afternoon. A few hours later, if they had not disappeared, a pleasant meal might have been served, with those materials as its main substratum and basis. For, be it remembered, in hot weather, as in cold, eating is one necessity of human existence. The incident recalled an entry in a French tourist's diary, to the effect that, after a long day spent in exploring the banks of what Germans call the Genfer See, he and his wife dined after sunset on a lake trout and a salad.

The repast was delicate—almost sentimental; but in spite of what vegetarians say and do, people can't 'make meagre' every day. A little bit of meat now and then, if you can get it, is desirable. Only in summer the great majority of butcher's meats are unavoidably tough, because you cannot keep them till they are tender. In the tropics the application of certain leaves mollifies the muscular fibre of newly-slain animals. Fresh meat, however, can be rendered tender by culinary skill, and an example of the method shall be given.

ROYAL, OR SEVEN HOURS', LEG OF MUTTON—GIGOT À LA ROYALE. Bone your leg, leaving only the knuckle-joint as a handle. Fill up the hollow left by the extracted bone with bacon chopped small, and any stuffing you please that is well flavoured with aromatic herbs. Then bind it round with tape, so as to restore its original

form. Put it into a stewpan with four carrots, six onions, two turnips, and a stick of celery, or if there be none blanched, two or three celery-leaves, idem bay-leaves, a sprig of thyme, idem of parsley, and three cloves, with a discreet quantity of pepper and salt. Pour enough boiling water into the stewpan to avoid all risk of burning; cover with the lid very, very close, and stew slowly five hours (though seven is the traditional space of time).

FOR SAUCE make a *roux*, as the French call it, or flour browned in butter at the bottom of a stewpan—the first element of all made-dishes—proceeding thus: Put into your stewpan a piece of butter proportionate to the quantity to be prepared. Let it heat gradually; when on the point of boiling, add the quantity of flour requisite to bring it to the thickness you want, and stir it round rapidly, so as to thoroughly amalgamate the butter till it be of the proper colour, chestnut brown, which must be obtained by slow degrees. A *roux* need not necessarily be made with butter; other kinds of fat or grease will serve. For instance, in the present case, or for hashed mutton, you may make your preliminary *roux* with the fat from the gravy of cold roast mutton or beef; the same of veal or poultry.

Your *roux* nicely browned, throw into it a small handful of shallots chopped very fine. Strain the vegetables cooked with the mutton, and press all the juice out of them. Add this, and the gravy from the mutton, with a large tablespoonful of chopped pickled samphire, or its popular and milder substitute, salicornia, glasswort, to the *roux*; heat these together up to boiling-point; lay your mutton in a large hot dish, and pour the sauce over it.

A similar treatment may be

applied to ribs of beef, or to the loin from which the underside (which is always tender) has been taken for slicing into small steaks. If young shorthorn carrots are used, they may be laid whole round the joint as garnish. One merit of Seven Hours' Mutton is, that it can be kept hot without spoiling, if the dinner-hour be not punctually observed in consequence of the temptations of summer rambles. Another is, that what is left, warmed up next day, is just as good as at the first serving.

As a seasonable summer dish I will dare to recommend cold meat of any kind—roast, as a rule, preferable to boiled—accompanied by a plate of ham, salt beef, or tongue, sparingly garnished with watercress. A garnish of parsley is not eaten; a garnish of watercress is. Notwithstanding the threadbare jokes and commonly-expressed contempt of cold mutton—people repeat a phrase or opinion, each one more emphatically after the other, just as a flock of sheep will jump a yard high in following a leader who has only jumped a foot—I venture to opine that, in nine cases out of ten, cold mutton is better than hashed. The nearer the bone the sweeter the flesh, as the gentleman said of his extra-thin wife; and that sweetness of flavour is too apt to be lost by hashing, or other modes of warming-up. The best forms or modifications of hash, namely, harricoed mutton and hot mutton-pies, are made with fresh—not ready-cooked—meat. One of Lord Beaconsfield's noble *dramatis personæ*, on sitting down to a feast of fine made-dishes, asks for cold meat; and because there is none in the house, goes without his dinner. I may, therefore, be permitted to say that no offence would be taken if, when invited to dine out during

the Dog-days, I were shown the cold shoulder—a shoulder of mutton. Lady Wortley Montagu's wish—

'And when the long hours with the public
are past,

May we meet with champagne and a
chicken at last!—

surely did not mean a *hot* roast chicken. True, cold mutton every day would tire, like anything else; like '*toujours perdrix*' every day. 'Variety is pleasing,' says the doctor's dietary, as well as the schoolmaster's copybook. Moreover, by a cold meat repast, I do not mean a meal off remnants. Joints or poultry intended to be served cold should be left untouched, and not cut up until the time of serving, in order that their natural juices may be retained and give succulence to the meat, instead of oozing out and getting wasted. The same of cold pies—as veal, chicken, rabbit, and so on.

The obvious accompaniment to cold meats is SALAD, which may be truly said to fill the bowl which cheers, but not inebriates. No wonder that, tradition tells us, it takes three people to make a good salad: a sage, to contribute the salt; a miser, to add the vinegar; and a prodigal, to pour in the oil. To which may be added an untiring steam-arm or electric motor, to stir up the mixture for an indefinite time. For, if 'when taken, to be well shaken' is applicable to anything that enters the human stomach, it assuredly is to the assemblage of ingredients which go to make a finished salad. In default of an automatic mechanical salad-mixer, it is the host's duty to perform that task; and it is polite on his part to help himself first, because the best lies at the bottom of the bowl. *Fatiguer*, to fatigue the salad, is the French expressive description of how it ought to be turned over and over;

so much so, that '*Je vais te faire ta salade*' is a popular threat that a good drubbing, instead of a good time, is coming. Another saying, '*Bataillons de salade*,' battalions drawn promiscuously from diverse and sundry corps of soldiers, is founded on the multiplicity of herbs eligible for the composition of a salad. The hemp plant was known as '*Salade de Gascogne*,' Gascony Salad, because it furnished ropes wherewith malefactors in the south of France were hanged. By such salad many a one has been choked, who previously had cultivated the cause of his death—thereby suffering a much worse malady than that implied by the proverb,

'Qui vin ne boit après salade
Est en danger d'estre malade.'

'After salad take some wine,
And health with pleasure thus combine.'

'Salad eaten, claret take,
And so avoid a stomach-ache.'

A glass of good Bordeaux or Burgundy wine, or even of pale ale, with or after salad, is a better, and, to many people, a more agreeable digestive than pepper—white, black, or red—mixed with the vegetables as seasoning.

Midsummer is not the time to dilate on winter salad-plants; but as winter is sure to arrive in course of time, a mention of some may be a useful reminder to the gardener as well as to the provision-purveyor. Late autumn should supply well-blanchéd broad-leaved endive, crisp and pleasant; curled or frizzled endive, very pretty to look at, but hard and wiry to chew; red beetroot, slowly baked in an oven, ornamental and original, both in appearance and flavour; blanchéd celery, aromatic and wholesome in moderate quantity. The best way is to mix it, chopped very fine, with other things, and then to say nothing about it.

French journals—probably by way of padding to their paper—are constantly recommending celery as a remedy for gout and rheumatism. Let those believe who have been cured by its use. Watercress, methinks, is best eaten alone, unaccompanied by other herbs, and *au naturel*, without any dressing or condiment except a grain of salt. Its union in that state with roast fowl or turkey is perfectly orthodox and deservedly praiseworthy. Early winter watercress is preferable to any other. Spring watercress is a favourite nidus for the eggs of creatures called inferior or simple; and, if hatched in the stomach, we don't know what they may grow to. Later on, you get Capucin's beard, starved chicory plants made to shoot forth long narrow leaves in the dark in a cellar, which thereby become yellowish ivory-white, tempting and nutty, but supplying your molars with capital exercise. Dandelion follows, blanched either accidentally in mole-hills, or intentionally by earthing-up, or grown in any dark hole or cave. The prejudiced and incredulous who refuse to give it a trial have no idea what a mistake they make. Messrs. Vilmorin-Andrieux & Co. of Paris supply seed, not only of the ordinary kind, but also of an *improved* variety of dandelion, if you please. Full-hearted, ameliorated dandelion! Would not that make our rustics stare? Last and worst, you have corn salad, lamb lettuce, mâche, a valerian, to be eaten sitting on a stool of repentance—which often follows after it is swallowed, when it is too late to wish you had let it alone. While lamb lettuce is running up to seed, the delicate frame lettuces and spring radishes come in, commencing once more the cycle of the culinary year.

Lettuce supplies the grand staple

of summer salads. Its varieties are, not countless, but difficult to count. For practical purposes, they may be divided into two classes, cabbage and cos, the latter unjustly looked down upon by French cooks and epicures.

A WEEK-DAY SALAD. As you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, so neither can you make a salad without pulling lettuces to pieces. Have *plenty* of some good hard-hearted sort, reject all the coarser outer leaves; they will feed your fowls and your guinea-pigs, and your canary-birds will not despise them. Take only the choicest inner leaves and hearts, which latter you may cut in halves or quarters. Some cooks prefer *not* to wash their lettuce; nevertheless, to avoid unknown unpleasantnesses, do. But they must not get sodden by lying long in water. Dry them by shaking and swinging them in a coarse napkin or wire salad-basket. Transfer them to the bowl, pour enough oil over them for every leaf, by patient stirring, to get well smeared with it on both sides. Fill a large tablespoon with tarragon vinegar; stir into it half a small mustard-spoonful of mustard, or less. Pour this over the oiled salad, and stir again. Put *no* salt, because salt, by extracting the moisture from the lettuce leaves, renders them more or less flabby, in proportion to the time of its action. Those who like a salted salad can add the pounded crystals on their plate.

It is understood that the oil, whether olive or poppy, should be of the very best quality. TARRAGON VINEGAR, which is useful for other purposes besides salad-making, is made by loosely filling a wide-mouthed bottle or pickle-jar with sprigs of fresh young tarragon, and then covering them with good vinegar, cold. After standing several days, the cold infusion

will be impregnated with the peculiar flavour of the plant. When the first-made infusion is exhausted, more vinegar, poured over the same sprigs, will be nearly as good as the previous brewing. Well corked, it will keep indefinitely.

HORSE-RADISH VINEGAR is made in the same way with scraped horse-radish, to be employed cautiously in salads that accompany cold roast beef, as well as to give a piquancy to sauces (oyster, caper, lobster, or plain melted butter) served with boiled fish, as cod, haddock, soles, or turbot.

Of salad mixtures, as sold ready-made in shops, I am unable, never using them, to speak. Possibly, like patent sauces, they may be serviceable now and then on pressing occasions, and to make a change.

HOLIDAY SALAD. This should be an exercise of individual taste and skill, never twice exactly alike. The directions for making it can therefore only be general, a leading sketch of the principal outlines. The bowl to contain it should be capable of holding twice as much salad as you intend to put in, because, in the important act of mixing, it is impossible to have it 'without o'erflowing, full.'

Select and oil your salad leaves as before. In a small basin stir up together, with a fork, oil and aromatised vinegar, until they are beaten to the consistence of thick cream. Pour this over the lettuce, and mix well together in the bowl. Chop as fine as possible a few fresh green tarragon leaves, and sprinkle them over the top of the salad. You may vary these, another day, by finely-minced chervil leaves, or garden cress, or blanched celery. The object of these aromatics is, that those who partake of the salad may ask themselves what it is which makes this particular salad so delicious, with-

out being able to answer their own question. This preliminary preparation completed, the top of the salad may be garnished with nasturtium and borage flowers, hard egg cut into thin slices, turnip-radishes idem, narrow strips of anchovy preserved in oil, or any other suggestion of your inventive faculties, tastily disposed about the surface, with the sole condition that every one of these ornamental articles shall be not only pretty, but eatable. So arranged, the salad-bowl can be set on the table with its fork and spoon beside it, *à la Russe*. When the moment approaches for handing it round; its contents must be first indefatigably mixed and incorporated together by the host or the hostess. Alexandre Dumas the elder forbids that responsible task to be performed by a servant. Or, perhaps, some lady, with handsome arms or splendid bracelets, will consent to do it. In any case, it must be done, and that with a good will, thoroughly.

AROMATISED VINEGAR, *à la Duquenoy*, for salads (French). Into a large stone or glass jar put, in quantities dependent on your judgment and your means of procuring them, sprigs of tarragon; pink petals of the old cabbage rose, and red petals of the damask rose; nasturtium flowers; sage leaves; summer savory leaves (an annual plant of the easiest culture; winter savory is a sub-shrubby perennial); small onions, like those used for pickling; as little garlic as you think fit, but some; cloves; whole pepper; allspice, whole; bay leaves, and thyme. Cover the whole with first-rate vinegar; let them infuse two or three months; strain and filter, and then decant into small bottles for use.

SALAD FOR COLD MUTTON, LAMB, OR VEAL. Use cos lettuce in preference. Break, with the

fingers, the tender inner leaves into short lengths. Oil them in the salad-bowl. Dissolve, in a large tablespoon, pounded lump-sugar in vinegar; pour it over the lettuce, and mix again. Or, instead of the sugared vinegar, you can use a little mint sauce, made by infusing chopped spearmint in sweetened vinegar. If the lettuce-stalk is fleshy and tender, peel it, cut it into bits the size of a pea, and add it to the salad.

Lettuces, which bear carriage well, can be had in plenty, and a small garden can hardly grow salading enough for a season's use; but it can find room for the *fournitures*, the small plants which give the finishing touch, which ought to be within easy reach, and which are good for nothing unless fresh gathered. A portion of the garden may therefore be profitably assigned to tarragon, which, once well established, should not be disturbed; curled-leaved parsley; chervil, to be sown several times during the summer; garden cress, the same; borage, producing a long succession of sky-blue flowers; nasturtium, of orange and brown ones.

SALADS OF COOKED VEGETABLES, liked by many, can be made of those left cold, with the addition of others boiled for the purpose, but always employed in variety. Common ingredients are thin-sliced potatoes, cauliflower or broccoli divided into sprigs, French beans, scarlet runners, boiled onions or shallot, green peas, asparagus tips, garden beet, or whatever else is in season, all dressed as for uncooked salad, and garnished at top with a spoonful of capers, pickled nasturtium flower-buds or young seeds, strips of anchovy, with the addition of bits of cold fowl, fish, pickled salmon, hard egg, potted mackerel, or whatever little tit-bits can tempt the eye and the appetite.

Example: FIGARO'S SALAD

(cooked). Slice several Spanish onions and a baked beetroot; add boiled broccoli or cauliflower, celery cut into lengths, and haricots. Season with the usual *furniture*; and to give the dish a more seductive appearance, ornament the summit with a few fresh lettuce and chervil leaves.

VOL-AU-VENT, Fly-with-the-Wind; a defective noun, with no plural form. You may neither say 'Two delicious Vol-au-Vents were soon eaten up,' nor 'Three execrable Vols-au-Vent were a disgrace to the cook.' It is a light form of pastry, with a raised border all round it, devised to receive fish, flesh, fowl, and even fruit, in which case it becomes a simple tart. The name being derived from the verb *voler*, to fly, grammarians insist that it should be written *vole-au-vent*; but having eaten it excellently made by persons who could neither read nor write, I will not dwell longer on its orthography.

A Vol-au-Vent, then, is a circular crust of the lightest possible puff-paste, with a deep hole in the middle. How the hole gets there is as puzzling to the laity as the presence of the apple inside the dumpling was to George III. If you live within reach of a good pastry-cook, he will solve the enigma for you, and leave you to fill the vacant hollow at home. In fact, making the crust of a Vol-au-Vent is one of the things which require to be *seen* done. Patties, or Petits Pâtés, of whatever kind, have their crust made in the same way as that for a Vol-au-Vent, only on a smaller scale. A number of them may be baked at once on the same iron plate, placing them so as not to touch each other. They are then filled with diverse contents; so forming oyster, lobster, minced veal, minced fowl, leveret, and a variety of other patties, all welcome when summer heats dis-

incline the palate to more solid viands.

As a Vol-au-Vent may be made of *anything*, and must contain a variety of ingredients, most of which require previous preparation, it is an economical way (except that the crust is comparatively costly) of reproducing, in an elegant form, many little remnants which would otherwise be wasted. The housekeeper, on looking over the contents of her store-room, can often out of them *compose* an original Vol-au-Vent. There is scope for her inventive genius. Bits of cold fowl, pigeon, meat, game, and forcemeat; unused oyster, caper, shrimp, or anchovy sauce, will, with judicious additions costing little, and a well-made tastefully-flavoured sauce, constitute a dish pleasing to the eye as well as to the palate. You may thus turn to a useful purpose delicate joints of poultry, brains, bits of veal; the livers of chicken, ducks, or geese; cocks'-combs and kidneys; morsels of rabbit, portions of sausage, stuffings, and balls of fried mincemeat—anything, in short, which you have at hand. A meat Vol-au-Vent may have its character varied by a *slight* predominance of mushroom or walnut ketchup, of Harvey's, Worcestershire, Reading, or other popular sauce; by truffles, lemon-peel, or even a dash of curry-powder.

Although at a *hot* dinner Vol-au-Vent is naturally served warm, many people like it quite as well cold as hot, or even better. Cold, it makes a nice supper dish, and is especially presentable at what the housemaids of my youth called a 'cold collection.' VOL-AU-VENT OF SWEETBREADS AND OYSTERS is one of the best. A fine sweetbread will make enough for from ten to twelve persons. The ragoût, when finished, may be divided between *two* crusts (as they are never

made large), or saved till another day.

Procure the sweetbreads as fresh as possible; if the same day on which the calf is slaughtered, so much the better. Put them immediately into cold water with a little salt in it, where they may remain half an hour or so to cleanse and whiten. Then transfer them into boiling water, with a dessert-spoonful of salt thrown into it. Let them boil galloping, well covered with the water, twenty or five-and-twenty minutes, according to size, until they are enough, not too much, cooked. Take out, drain, let cool, and set aside in your meat-safe or larder. They are now ready to be employed in any of the ways in which sweetbreads are served. For your Vol-au-Vent take your cold sweetbread, prepared as above directed. Cut it into dice, which you are to salt, pepper, and dredge with flour.

Have ready opened in a basin two or three dozen oysters, according to size, with their beards on, and all their liquor; also a small teacupful of button mushrooms, preserved or fresh; also the flesh of a dozen olives, pared as you would pare an orange, all in one piece, only as thick as possible and close to the kernel, which kernels you throw away.

Into your stewpan put a quarter of a pound of butter; melt it; add a good tablespoonful of flour, stirring well, and pouring in stock-broth gradually, until your sauce attains a creamy consistency. Season with salt, pepper, or cayenne, and a perceptible dust of grated nutmeg. Then put in your sweetbreads, stirring continually, for fear of their burning or browning. When thoroughly heated, add, one after the other, your oysters, mushrooms, and olives, a glass of madeira, marsala, or sherry, and either a tablespoonful of tarragon

or aromatised vinegar or the juice of half a lemon. Taste if sufficiently highly seasoned, and serve in the vol-au-vent crust, after gently warming it. Should oysters not be attainable, they can be replaced by portions of the meat of cold chicken and a few small pieces of thin-sliced ham.

Vol-au-Vent of fish is excellent, being moreover serviceable for the days on which Catholics abstain from meat. That of shrimps is one of the best; made thus: when your shrimps are picked from their shells, mix a little flour with enough milk to cover them. Add butter, pepper, and salt; set it on the fire; when well combined, throw in the shrimps; and just before putting this ragout into the crust, stir into it one or two raw yolks of eggs.

Sweets should succeed to savories. A VOL-AU-VENT OF FRUIT, highly recommended by Alexis Soyer, once a great authority, does not require the brim to be so high as in others, especially as the fruit ought to be dressed in the form of a pyramid, when possible. If the puff-paste of which it is to be formed be cut about three quarters of an inch in thickness, it will be quite enough. When nearly baked, sift some powdered sugar over it, and put it back in the oven to glaze; if not hot enough, use the salamander. Remove the interior puff-paste, as for savoury Vol-au-Vent, taking care not to make a hole in the bottom or sides. Fill with any kind of cooked fruit you like; but never mix two kinds, except currant and raspberry. Rhubarb also, cut into lengths of one inch and stewed with sugar, makes, after cooling, a very inviting and wholesome Vol-au-Vent. Green or half-ripe gooseberries, similarly treated, the same.

GÂTEAU MOUSSELINE, MUSLIN

CAKE; simple, light, and keeps well, because no butter enters into its composition. This recipe alone is worth more than the cost of our number. Beat the whites of four eggs to a snowy froth; then stir in the beaten yellows. Add to these a quarter of a pound of grated or powdered lump-sugar, a quarter and half a quarter of a pound of flour; flavour with oil of almonds, essence of noyeau or of lemon; three or four drops suffice. Bake in tin moulds not too deep.

FRENCH WINE PUDDING. Procure half a pound of French rolls, ten egg-yolks, half a pound of sugar, a pint of wine, red or white according to taste, a quarter of a pound of Corinth raisins, the same quantity each of Malaga raisins, sweet almonds, and candied fruits, such as citron-peel, greengages, or cherries. Grate the outside of each roll, and set the raspings aside. Put the egg-yolks into a salad-bowl with the pounded sugar; beat well together, and then add the wine, a little powdered cinnamon and minced lemon-peel. Mix well together. Then cut the rolls into slices, and soak them in the liquid thus prepared. This will take some little time. Butter the inside of a mould, and sprinkle it with the raspings of the rolls. Place in it alternately a layer of the soaked roll, a layer of pounded almonds, raisins, and candied fruits, until you have employed all your materials; pour over them the remainder of the liquor, and cook two hours in a *bain-marie* or water-bath.

Prepare a SAUCE by beating up three or four egg-yolks with pounded sugar; warm up some wine with a little sugar, and add it to the egg-yolks at the moment of serving.

ICES, unless recommended by a medical man for external application, are better taken with caution, best abstained from.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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